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# EVER-DAY WORDS AND THEIR USES

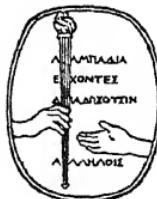
A GUIDE TO  
CORRECT DICTION

BY

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HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS  
NEW YORK AND LONDON

BOOKS BY  
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HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK

EVER-DAY WORDS AND THEIR USES  
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Printed in the United States of America  
Published October, 1916

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## INTRODUCTION

THIS book explains the meaning and use of a thousand or more every-day words and expressions which are frequently misused or misunderstood. It is intended to give exactly the information most often wanted, and to present it in compact, accessible form, without pedantry, formality, or technicality. It is intended to save the person who wants to know from the labor of searching through dictionaries, grammars, and rhetorics (or of searching for them, if he does not have them at hand) and of piecing together for himself (if he can find it) the information he wants on a given word or phrase. Such a volume should be like beauty in one respect at least, in that it is "its own excuse for being." That the public is interested in such matters as are discussed in these pages is an axiom to those who know the daily grist of questions on correct English usage that comes to the copy-reader, the proof-reader, the professor, the editor, from persons of all sorts who have the praiseworthy desire to use and not to abuse the English language.

With such questions I have had intimate experience for a number of years—a number that seems large when I confess it, but still too small for a re-

spectable boast. I dealt with many of them in a volume published not long ago, *A Guide to Good English*, and not the least of my reasons for considering the book successful is the fact that questions continue to come to me—indeed, one could answer them till doomsday without exhausting the list. In them this book takes its origin; its foundation lies in a wider and deeper experience, that of English-speaking people in using words for the last ten centuries, as exhibited in the invaluable collection of examples arranged in the *Oxford Dictionary*. It is on experience, then, that I have tried in every case to base my judgment; not on hearsay, theory, or tradition.

The principle would seem to be an obvious one; doubtless every one of my predecessors in the field—and they are many—has set himself to follow it. But no one who examines many such books with care can avoid seeing the tendency of them to perpetuate errors, personal controversies and whims, and a traditional list of words and phrases, into which experience never guided them. One, for example, solemnly objects to the word *cultured* on the ground that there is no verb *to culture*, and a troop of others follow him like a flock of sheep. If any one of them had consulted his speaking knowledge of the language, he might have seen that the suffix *-ed* is often added to a noun to mean “provided with”—*stilted* does not imply a verb *to stilt*, and when we say that Paul Revere was “booted and spurred,” we mean that he was “ready to ride,” and not that he was kicked and pricked. Another invents a word which to him expresses the quality of Emerson’s essays,

and, under cover of discussing the word, barks at Emerson's heels through some four pages of fine print, a process which injures Emerson no more than it enlightens the public on the use of English words. That these instances are typical, any one may see for himself who cares to stir the dust of controversies perpetuated in their day by those who sought to end them.

It is proverbially easier for a doctor to disagree with another than to heal himself; and this is no less true of Doctors of Philosophy than of Doctors of Medicine,—they, no less than physicians, are in danger of infection from much dealing with morbid specimens. If I have avoided some of the errors I see in the work of others, it is not by fixing my mind on them, but by holding as an ideal the best usage of to-day. I have had before me, too, the results of the best scholarship of the age, but just now becoming available in complete form as the *Oxford Dictionary* nears completion. What I have accomplished I am sure I could not have accomplished without it; and I am sure that most earlier writers on the subject could have accomplished more than I with less effort if they had had before them the results of the labors of thousands of intelligent and industrious readers, the millions of quotations, that go to make the *Oxford Dictionary* what it is. To it I make my main acknowledgment. Other indebtedness I can acknowledge only in general, to a wide variety of other works, from Anglo-Saxon lexicons to magazine articles on slang.

Many of the questions which come to the profes-

sional worker with words are such as the dictionary does not answer. It tells us satisfactorily how words *have been* used, provided it is based on sufficiently wide research. On what might be termed the negative side, how *not* to use words, it often affords no information,—unless it be by inference. On current idiom and slang (how certain words *are* used) it is unsatisfactory, for its machinery moves too slowly to keep up with language in the making. In such shallows a lighter craft may move more easily and safely.

In the matter of negative usage, how not to use words, I have tried to keep a useful middle course between two dangers. On the one hand, I have tried to avoid dwelling on errors till they become the most memorable part of the discussion; on the other, I hope I have not failed to identify them so that they may be avoided.

Current phrase offers no such plain sailing. Instead, we have sand-bars that shift with every tide; personal experience and judgment are the only pilots. Such help as they afford me, I offer to others, in the form of discussion of a number of popular expressions that are seeking admission to the language.

The main part of the book is the alphabetical list of words and expressions to which one may refer as to a dictionary. Such reference may be made by one who has not mastered, nor so much as read, the preceding part on the "Guiding Principles in the Choice of Words." These principles I have tried to outline in the briefest and simplest form for the

benefit of those who wish to acquire standards of judgment as a foundation for habits of correct usage. Here, as throughout the book, I have tried to present matter that will be useful and acceptable to those who have gone far into the subject in a form that will be no less useful to those who have had no special training in it. I have necessarily used a number of grammatical terms; these will be found alphabetically arranged and explained in the glossary at the end of the book. In the main word-list I have not discussed such grammatical principles as would necessarily be listed under their ordinary names, such as "Sequence of Tenses," or "Use of the Subjunctive." For such matters I may be allowed to refer the reader to *A Guide to Good English*. Some of them, however, I have explained in discussing constructions in which they occur, and to these I have given cross-references, such as, "Article, repetition of; see *A*," "Connectives; see *And*."

In dealing with the principles of grammar, as with other principles, I have been guided by my belief that the ways of our speech are formed by the users of it; that grammarians and dictionary-makers are not kings in the realm, but merely recording secretaries; that it is the most democratic of human institutions.

R. P. UTTER.

'AMHERST COLLEGE, June, 1916.



Part I

GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE  
USE OF WORDS



# EVERY-DAY WORDS AND THEIR USES

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE USE OF WORDS

“How is any one to know? I can’t memorize the whole dictionary!” says the beginner, when called to account for some misuse of words.

No, he cannot memorize the whole dictionary; and if he could and did, he would be a fool in spite of his knowledge, for doing by sheer effort of memory what he might do by intelligent method. Let him hold in his memory some elementary matters about the words (there are not many of them) that he uses every day, and acquire a grasp of a few simple principles that guide us in the use of all words. With these he will be as well equipped as any one is expected to be save an expert on the subject.

### *Grammar*

The first of these principles is that of grammar. And to many who wish to enter upon some knowledge of the subject, the name of grammar is a grim

word written over the portal, forbidding entrance and forbidding hope. But grammar is simply a record of the ways of the language we use, and these ways have been shaped unconsciously by the people who have spoken it,—people for the most part who, if they so much as know the name of grammar, know it only to deride it or shudder at it. When we define grammar, then, as “the science of language,” we mean that men have studied language, and recorded its ways of accomplishing its ends. Grammar is the record, for as long a period as we have record, of our customs or ways of using speech. It is like other law, merely codified custom.

A treatise on grammar will be found to consist for the most part of discussion of the form of words (accidence, inflectional changes) and of their relations to one another in sentences (syntax). In English, we have comparatively little to do with inflectional changes of form, declensions, that is, and conjugations. In ordinary speech we use the word grammar much as if it meant syntax, and that is what it means here.

Other things being equal, the word or expression is to be preferred which conforms to the laws of grammar. It is on this principle that we decide between *shall* and *will*, or between *don't* and *doesn't* in a given sentence; it is this principle which tells us whether we are to say “Let every one take his seat,” or “Let every one take their seats.” For the most part, we follow rules of grammar without knowing they exist, but the moment we begin to set ourselves standards of correctness in speech we find it neces-

sary to make some study of the written code. The elements of grammar are accessible in simple form,<sup>1</sup> and must be understood by any one who wishes to have any independent judgment as to good diction.

But in this great democratic institution of language, the sovereign people have the right to violate the rules they have made for themselves,—if they can agree to do so. That a construction is ungrammatical is a sufficient objection to it unless the objection is overruled by the users of the language. Such expressions as *if I please*, *I had rather*, *you were best*, we cannot parse,—at least if we take the words in their usual modern meanings. But they are as deeply rooted in custom as are the customs, or laws, they violate, and so are laws in themselves. Such apparent exceptions are called idioms. The idioms of our own language ordinarily give us no trouble until the pedant challenges them; then we may be hard pressed to defend them unless we know something of their history. When the pedant tells us that we must not say “*I had rather*” because it is ungrammatical; instead we must say “*I would rather*”; we may answer loftily, if we know the facts, “One is idiomatic, the other grammatical; both are acceptable.”

### *Good Use*

Good use differs from grammar chiefly in that it does not profess to be a science. It, too, is custom, but it is less definitely reduced to a code, more arbitrary

<sup>1</sup> For example, in *A Guide to Good English*, by the author of this book, Harper & Brothers, 1914, pp. 138–159.

in its decrees, and on the whole rather vaguely defined. In practice it seems to apply to the use of words as words, not in their syntactical relation,—it is most often discussed in connection with choice of words.

A word is commonly said to be in good use when it is in “present, national, and reputable use.” Whether it is so or not, we are to determine by the usage of a “majority of the best writers and speakers.”

The question of present use need not detain us long. We do not as a rule garnish our speech with obsolete words (words that have passed out of use). If a man uses such words as *erst*, *whilom*, *yore*, *doff*, in every-day speech, we think him affected; if he uses *axe* for *ask*, *learn* for *teach*, *you was* for *you were*, we think him vulgar or provincial. It is not necessary to know that these were once in good use, and to condemn them as obsolete; they may very well be condemned on other grounds.

A word that is not in national use is condemned as local, provincial, dialect, or foreign. Local, provincial, and dialect words are those which do not pass current outside of certain regions, such as, *I reckon*, *you all*, *calculate* in the sense of *think*, *suppose*, or *expect*. Technical words are confined to comparatively small numbers of users, however widely scattered. They usually belong to trades, professions, occupations, and interests of various kinds, each of which has its own vocabulary. The golfer, the baseball enthusiast, the sailor, the railroad man, the college student, the lawyer, the cattleman, each has command of a large number of words

that are almost unintelligible to the layman. These sometimes originate as slang and come into serious use, or originate as serious technical words and come into general use as slang through their application to other matters. A word is condemned as technical when its meaning is not clear to those outside the group to whom it belongs, or when it carries some undesirable suggestion of the special interest to which it pertains.

Foreign words, in their foreign forms, are sometimes condemned as in bad taste where the user might have used the English equivalent but for his desire to display his knowledge,—such are *entre nous*, *kudos*, *in medias res*, and many others. Phrases that have no exact English equivalent, such as *tour de force*, *dolce far niente*, *savoir faire*, *blasé*, and some others, may be used without reproach if used discriminately. Sometimes an English word takes over the meaning of a corresponding foreign word, and may then be condemned as foreign usage until it is universally accepted in the new sense. *Antecedents* in the sense of *previous history*, and *pronounced* in the sense of *strongly marked*, have taken these meanings from the French *antécédent* and *prononcé*, respectively, and are now in good use in these senses.

It is easy for most of us to keep our speech free from words that are not in present or in national use, but with the large body of slang words that are not in reputable use the case is different. In the first place, slang differs so little at times from legitimate speech; its metaphors are often almost identical,

the difference being only that slang is intentionally humorous, grotesque, or in bad taste. The metaphor in the Latin word *apprehend* and the English *catch on* is exactly the same; from the Latin through the French we have *assault*, and in slang we have *jump on*, in which the figure is almost identical. One may without reproach speak of some disturbing element as "a jarring note," but if one says, of a note or anything else, "wouldn't that jar you?" clearly he is using slang, although the metaphor is the same in either expression. The difference is in the intention with which the expression is used. When a slang expression is used with no intention of being humorous or in bad taste, it is not slang so far as the user is concerned, though the hearer or reader may feel it to be so. Whether the speaker has so little taste as to wish to use slang, or such ignorance as not to know he is using it, or so small a vocabulary that he cannot help it, is usually a matter of little importance to the hearer. It is all very well to use slang when it conveys exactly the impression one wishes to convey; in order to do so, one must know both slang and legitimate speech well enough to know exactly what each means to his hearers.

A speaker who does not wish to use slang, but thinks he must because he has no other vocabulary, has no remedy but to learn English. If he keeps eyes and ears open, he will find that the slang expression that has no equivalent in legitimate speech is rare indeed. By observing the speech of those who do not use slang, by reading, and by searching dictionaries for such slang expressions as are recorded,

he will soon find the legitimate phrase for every slang phrase he uses. The genuine wish to acquire correct diction is the one real necessity.

The person who uses slang because he has never heard any other form of speech, and does not know it is slang, has a somewhat harder problem, but the remedy is essentially the same: he must learn English. He usually first realizes that his diction is faulty by coming in contact with those who speak more correctly. The moment he begins to see the difference between his speech and theirs, he begins to see what is slang and what is not. This knowledge may be extended as far as the learner has the perseverance to extend it, by means of observation, reading, and study.

Many users of slang defend their practice on the ground that slang words ultimately come into good use, and may as well be accepted at one time as another. It is true that slang represents a living element in language, a real principle of life and growth. But it does not follow that every slang word or phrase will at last become a part of the language. Many slang words remain slang for centuries; *booze*, for example, meaning *liquor*, or *to drink liquor*, was slang before Shakespeare's time just as it is to-day. Large numbers of others fade and disappear after a brief vogue,—every slang dictionary is a museum of these withered metaphors. Many vulgar words never make their way into polite society because they are names for vulgar things. It may be good form, for example, to take a glass of wine after dinner, but drinking for the sake of getting

drunk (*boozing*) is not freely spoken of except among those who do it. It is rather vulgar to talk much about money, especially the need of it, in polite society, and no slang terms are older than those which pertain to money. In using such words one is not helping the language to legitimate growth, but merely giving encouragement to its disreputable auxiliaries. In using words that are sure to disappear we give useless aid to a cause which is lost from the start. Some of these ephemeral words rise on waves of public interest in temporary things, and go down as quickly. Slang words and phrases that involve metaphors which are far-fetched, or unintelligible, are not likely to last. The slang meaning of *twenty-three*, for example, is now nearly forgotten. *Chestnut* lasted longer, but is now seldom heard. No satisfactory explanation was ever offered for the meaning attached to these words.

The most promising applicants for admission to good use are useful abbreviations. Of these we have accepted a number against which vigorous protest was made in their day, such as *cab*, *cad*, *mob*, *bus*, *consols*,—probably *pup*, *pet*, *fad*, and many others belong in this class. Similarly, we may some day accept *auto*, *phone*, and even *zepp* (Zeppelin), which are gaining in public favor. But usefulness and brevity do not always win acceptance; *pants* has long been on the outskirts of good use, but has never been admitted, nor has *gent*. An expressive metaphor not far-fetched nor of obscure meaning may lose its suggestion of bad taste as soon as its glamour of novelty wears off; after that, it has nothing to over-

come but prejudice against its origin. *Recalcitrant* means primarily *kicking back*; *kick* was a sound metaphor for *object* in times of classic Rome. It is quite likely to prove acceptable to-day. So with *fall down* in the sense of *to fail* (as in "The new reporter fell down on his first assignment"), there is no vulgarity in the figure, its novelty has gone, and it finds itself daily in better company. Such expressions as *get by*, *slip one over*, *deliver the goods* (while they are slangy enough at present) have no more innate vulgarity than *cut in*, *try a fall*, *out of gear*, *play a lone hand*, or many another that has received the sanction of good use. The question of their ultimate acceptance is solely a question of their usefulness. As an example of the phrase the vulgarity of which is likely to keep it outside the pale, one might cite *chew the rag*, which appears to have come into civil life from military circles. Words imitative or suggestive of sounds (onomatopoetic), and those which are mouth-filling, or pleasing to the ear, beginning as slang, sometimes prove acceptable. Such is the history of *jabber* and *bamboozle*. But the fate of such words is difficult to forecast. *Skeezicks* and *skedaddle* (if they are ever used at all now) are still slang; *teetotaler* is colloquial. *Piffle* seems useful to those who are afraid of the French *persiflage*,—it has long been in the language, and has recently been revived as slang. It would seem to be as good a word as *jabber*. The limitation of all the words of this class is that they cannot be used except to carry a suggestion of humor or informality.

For the good of the language, it is well that a slang word should undergo a severe probation before it is admitted to good use,—for this reason, if for no other, our more or less instinctive opposition to slang should be encouraged. Still, there comes a time when further opposition to a phrase becomes old-fogyism. We feel this as we look back at Swift's opposition to *mob* and *banter*, and some others on his list, or William Cullen Bryant's to *compete*, *employe*, and certain others. But it is hard for any one who remembers an expression as a new-minted bit of slang ever to think of it as anything else. In 1899 the phrase *up to* ("It is up to you") emerged from the haunts of the poker-players into the street, and it is difficult for those who remember its origin and early course to forget its vulgarity. But those who do not so remember find it useful to-day even in dignified speech. *Graft* has a similar history, and so, to go farther back in time, have *sweater* and *bleachers*. When a word has been so far accepted by the rising generation that they use it without consciousness that it ever had a taint of vulgarity or grotesqueness, it has withstood the severest test. The taint has shown itself not ineradicable, but such as evaporates with time. After that, if the word is useful, further assaults of conservatism will grow weaker as the older generation dies out.

### *Precision*

The principle of precision, the exact expression of meaning, is very frequently involved in questions

which arise as to the use of words. Shall we say, "I live *at* Mill Valley," or, "I live *in* Mill Valley"? "I *anticipated* his arrival," or, "I *expected* his arrival"? "You are *at* fault," or, "You are *in* fault"? All are grammatical; all are in good use; the choice in each case depends on which of the two we mean.

The principle of precision as it applies to the choice of words is thus stated by Prof. A. S. Hill in his *Principles of Rhetoric*: "Of two forms of expression which may be used in the same sense, that one should be chosen which, in the case in hand, is susceptible of but one interpretation. Observance of this rule tends to give to each word a meaning of its own."

Any one who studies English words is soon impressed by the fact that there seem to be very few words, or pairs of words, that are in any strict sense synonymous. A group of so-called synonyms is usually a number of words of varying meanings shading off in all directions from the word around which they are grouped. In many cases, for ordinary purposes of speech, one word in such a group is as good as another; it conveys the general meaning, which is all that is required of it. But when the question of choice comes up, the principle of precision is invoked to settle it, and the learner must study the shades of meaning that make the difference between one word and another in the groups of "synonyms."

For the most part, this is a mere matter of memory, as most matters of language are. If the learner has some knowledge, though even a slight one, of

other languages than his own, he will find it a help here. If he knows a little Latin, it will help him to differentiate *discern*, *discriminate*, and *distinguish* in so far as they may be set apart in the senses in which their meanings are most alike. He will see at a glance that *eradicate* means *root out*, and that *eliminate* meant originally to *turn out of doors* (over the threshold), and that any difference that may be made in them is based on the difference between these two figures of speech. Similarly if he knows a little Greek, French, or German—indeed any language living or dead, it will help him to a discriminating sense of the meaning of English words without recourse to the dictionary. It has been truly said that no one really knows English who knows no language but English. For even through all the changes in meaning which words undergo in centuries of use, the tendency of words of similar meaning to become identical through loose usage, and the opposite tendency, that of words originally identical to grow apart,—in spite of these and other forces that work in the meanings of words, and in spite, too, of the fact that nine-tenths of the users of them know nothing of the root meanings, words keep in their modern uses a haunting sense of their origin.

### *The Metaphors in Words*

If we could go back to the very beginnings of language we should find it a process of arbitrary associations of sounds with ideas. But after this original combination of a few primitive ideas with a few

sound-symbols the process of language was one of recombination of idea syllables into new figurative meanings. One of these original symbols in one family of languages (the Aryan) seems to have been *dha*, meaning *to place* or *put*. It is represented in every European language to-day, in English by the word *do*. Even so simple a change of meaning as that from *put* to *do* involves a metaphor,—to *put* something somewhere is the commonest of all acts and so becomes the type of all action, *doing*. Thus nearly every word we use, if we trace it back ever so little, takes us to some figure of speech; *assault* means to *jump at*, *disturb*, to *drive apart in disorder*; *fret* means to *eat away*,—the list might be prolonged indefinitely. Of course most of our words, while historically they are metaphors, have lost to our minds all sense of their original figures. Many others are in transitional stages between one literal sense and another by way of figurative use. It is long since *eradicate* meant *root out*; still, if it is always used with that meaning in mind, it will be discriminately used. In so far as metaphor has any bearing on the use of words, the principle is that a word that has any trace of metaphor in its present significance should not be put to a use which is not in harmony with the metaphor.

Thus *caliber* means *the size of the bore of a gun*. It may be used in any figure in which the suggestion of firearms is not out of place. But the adjectives that may appropriately be applied to *caliber* are only those which would apply to the diameter of the bore of a gun. When the baseball reporter says,

"Smith in the box did work of high caliber," he has abused the metaphor in the word. "My Alma Mater is a fine example of Gothic architecture," and "Shakespeare could have straightened out the weak points," show blunders which the writer could not have committed if he had had the most elementary sense of the metaphors in the words he was using.

### *Simplicity*

Matthew Arnold places the sentence from the Book of Job, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" beside Franklin's paraphrase, "Does your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?" with the comment, "After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good sense!" Good sense, which Franklin usually had in abundance, is exactly the quality that guards us against any such "display of the verbal wardrobe" as this. The fault is a violation of the principle of simplicity in the use of words, the principle which directs us to use always the simplest and most direct word or phrase that exactly conveys the meaning. Thus, "It has not life enough to keep it from rotting," conveys exactly the same idea as "It has not sufficient vitality to preserve it from putrefaction," and is preferable because it is the form into which six persons out of ten would have to translate the idea if they encountered it in the second form. It is not that we always prefer Saxon words to Latin; if we did, we should say *forthwith* instead of *immediately*, *ween*

instead of *expect*, *steadfast* instead of *firm*, *withstand* instead of *resist*. We prefer simple words because they do not call the reader's attention away from the idea, either by their gay colors or the clatter of their many syllables, their rarity, their bombast of sound or idea. On this principle, *try* is better than *endeavor*, *begin* is better than *commence* (except in special senses), *better* (as a verb) is preferable to *ameliorate*, *about* is better than *anent*, *preparation* is better than *preparedness*, *foresight* is better than *foresightedness*, *give* is better than *donate*,—and the list could be prolonged to almost any length. The principle of simplicity rests ultimately on good taste,—indeed, so do most of the principles that guide us in the use of words; with good taste and the genuine wish to speak with ease and correctness the learner cannot wander far from the direct path.



Part II

EVERY-DAY WORDS  
ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED



# A

## A or An.

Correct use of *a* and *an* is entirely a matter of correct pronunciation. We use *a* before a word beginning with a consonant, and *an* before a word beginning with a vowel. In this rule aspirated *h* and the sound of consonant *y*, however indicated (as for example *Europe*), count as consonants. But a word beginning with either of these sounds in an unaccented syllable is commonly preceded by *an* in written speech, though orally *a* is commonly used in this position. Thus we write, *a history, an historian, a habit, an habitual smoker, a unit, an united nation*.

It may be that in practice we do not say “*an historian*.” Neither do we articulately say “*a historian*.” We open the teeth slightly and make an obscure vowel sound to represent both the *a* and the *i*, neglecting the *h* entirely, and make no articulation till we come to the *s*. The truth is that whether we use *a* or *an* we seldom pronounce *h* beginning an unstressed syllable. The rule given here is that given by both English and American authorities, but it fairly represents the American practice as seen by German eyes:

Americans always pronounce their *aitches* in stressed or accented syllables (except in a few old words of Latin

origin, such as *honest*, *honor*, and *hour*) and they leave them out in unstressed syllables. In *prohibit*, for instance, the *h* is pronounced; in *pro(h)ibition* it is silent. In the sentence “(H)e (h)ad hid (h)is hand under (h)er hat,” four of the aitches are ordinarily<sup>1</sup> silent” (Schooch and Kron, *The Little Yankee*).

That something like this is our practice, we admit by the formulation of our rule. If we condemn “an habitual smoker,” and “an historian,” as pedantic, we go a step further and acknowledge that, having dropped the *h*, we drop the *n* also. This may be the practice of a majority of speakers in the United States, but are they the best speakers?

*A* or *an*, like *the*, is repeated with two or more nouns in succession, when the nouns denote different persons or things. “They elected a president and a secretary,” means that they elected two officers; “they elected a president and secretary,” indicates that one person filled both offices.

#### A.B. or B.A.; A.M. or M.A.

These forms may be used interchangeably to indicate respectively the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts.

#### Abbreviations.

See *Ad.*, *Etc.*, *Esq.*, *Hon.*, *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, and others.

#### Ability and Capacity.

Of these two, *ability* is the more inclusive term, including *capacity*. *Ability* implies active exercise of

<sup>1</sup> In any ordinary speaking of this sentence, *hid*, *hand*, and *hat* would be stressed syllables.

power, *capacity* may be more or less passive receptivity. One might have *capacity* for *learning* without *ability* to teach.

### Abortive.

This word, figuratively used, should not mean merely *unsuccessful*, but *unsuccessful because premature or immature*. Examples are found, however, of its use to mean merely *unsuccessful* by some of the best English writers. Any one choosing to use it in this sense will find himself in good company, but without many companions.

### About and Around.

*About* may be used for every sense of *around*, but not *vice versa*. *Around* does not mean *nearly*, therefore “around a hundred” is incorrect for “about a hundred.” *Around* in the sense of *somewhere near* is a colloquialism in the United States. Such phrases as *be around*, *come around* (*somewhere near*), *somewhere round*, are purely colloquial. *Round* for *around* is good American usage. We say, “enough to go round,” “an all-round man,” where British usage would demand *around*.

### Above.

The use of *above* in such expressions as “the above address” has been idiomatic in English since Anglo-Saxon times. There is, however, a modern tendency to discourage the use of it in this sense. It may be easily avoided by employing such expressions as “the address given above,” or “the foregoing paragraph.”

**Accede and Concede.**

*Accede*, in the only sense which could be confused with that of *concede*, means *to assent, agree to*. This meaning is derived from the primary one, *join oneself, give one's adhesion*,—"they acceded to his proposal." *Concede* followed by *that* means *admit* or *allow* (a statement), *grant* (a right or privilege).

**Accept and Except.**

Confusion of these two words is usually merely a mistake or slip in spelling. *Accept* means *to receive* in various senses; *except* means *to leave out*.

The *Oxford Dictionary* tells us that in all its meanings except the commercial one, *accept* "is frequently followed by *of*." The construction is not so frequent since the end of the eighteenth century as it was before that time. The modern tendency is against it; recent writers on language call the *of* redundant.

**Acceptance and Acceptation.**

In most senses these words are interchangeable. *Acceptance* is now the usual word in the sense of *favorable reception*, as, "the theory now meets with general acceptance."

**Accident.**

An accident is not a wound, but may be the cause of the wound; the overturning of the car is the accident, the consequent broken legs and fractured skulls are the wounds. To say, "I have not yet recovered from the accident," or "Balm of Gilead

will cure any accident," is to confuse cause and effect.

### Accord.

Where *accord* conveys the idea of giving, it means *grant*, *bestow*, *concede*. To use it for ordinary meanings of *give* is (usually unduly) to magnify both the gift and the giver. It is especially unseemly when the giver is speaking.

### Accredit and Credit.

In the sense of *believe*, use *credit*,—"I do not credit the rumor." In the sense of *charge to an account* use *credit*. In the sense of *asccribe* or *attribute to*, use either word,—"They credit (accredit) him with great thoughts."

### Accuse.

See *Blame*.

### Acquaintance.

See *Friend*.

### Ad.

At best this is an abbreviation with a strong suggestion of slang. For any ordinary purpose the full form is better. Some such abbreviations have come into good use, as *cab* and *mob*; others, as *pants* and *gent*, have never proved acceptable. *Ad* may in time be accepted, but it is not in good use at present. *Auto* and *phone* are on their way to acceptance, but still sound slangy and vulgar to fastidious ears, as did *cab* (from *cabriolet*) when the vehicle first

appeared. (See also *Photo*.) Many such formations pass without challenge in college circles, but are slangy or unintelligible to those outside: such are *exam* for examination, *dorm* for dormitory, *math* for mathematics, *track* for track athletics, *polecon* for political economy, and many others. Indeed, most crafts, professions, and arts, have dialects of their own, half technical and half slang; many of which make their contributions in course of time to language.

Even legitimate abbreviations should be used sparingly; they often have a brusque appearance that suggests discourtesy.

#### Adapt.

*Adapt* means "to take over from one purpose to another, to make fit." With *to* or *for* it looks to the purpose or end,—"The car was a stock model adapted to racing." With *from*, it looks to the source,—"The play was adapted from the French."

#### Adjective forms used as adverbs.

See *Bad*.

#### Administer.

To speak of *administering* a blow or a rebuke is a humorous extension of a figurative meaning of the word. It can hardly be said to be in good use. The word (in this sense) means *to dispense or supply anything supposed to be beneficial to the recipient*. It is properly used of medicine, oaths, extreme unction, and such matters.

**Admire.**

*Admire* with the infinitive, as,

"I think I should admire  
To sit and dawdle over old  
Montaigne before the fire,"

is obsolete in good usage. In present usage it appears only in dialect and jokes.

**Admit.**

In figurative senses in which *admit* means *to allow a matter to enter into any relation to thought or action*, as *acknowledge*, *concede*, as, "We admit of no rivals in splendor," "The question does not admit of discussion," *admit* is followed by *of*. The phrase may possibly be elliptical for "admit the existence of," at all events, it seems not to be used where some such expression would not apply. See *Allow* and *Of*.

**Adopt.**

In such a sentence as "He adopted a new course of action," *adopt* ought to mean, *take over as one's own what was formerly another's*. This sense has become weakened till the word is now legitimately used to mean merely *to take as one's own*.

**Adore.**

See *Like*.

**Advantage.**

When *advantage* means *a state of forwardness in comparison with others*, advantages cannot logically

be spoken of as equal. In the sense of *benefit* or *improvement*,—and this is now an accepted meaning of the word,—we may speak of “equal advantages.”

### Advent.

“Again we were interrupted; this time by the advent of my trunk.” The word is correctly used here if it is meant for a joke; *an epoch-making arrival*.

### Affable.

This word is defined as, *Easy of conversation or address; civil and courteous in receiving and responding to the conversation and address of others, especially inferiors or equals*. The tendency is to restrict the use of the word to the attitude of superiors to inferiors.

### Affect and Effect.

*Affect* means *have an influence* (or *effect*) *on*; *effect* means *to accomplish*. We may *affect* a purpose by *influencing* (usually *changing*) it; or *effect* it by *accomplishing* or *fulfilling* it. We may *affect* (*influence*) a man, but we cannot *effect* (*accomplish*) him.

### A few.

See *Few*.

### Afraid.

The objection to *afraid that* used instead of *fear that* (“I’m afraid I can’t go,”) seems to be based on the theory that an adjective cannot take a dependent clause. The fact is, however, that the adjective

is a part of the verb ("be afraid"), and has been felt to be so for centuries. The construction has long been good English, but it is easy to avoid it, and with it the faultfinding of the censorious, who condemn it as colloquial.

**Afterward and Afterwards.**

*Afterward*, like *backward*, *downward*, *upward*, *inward*, *outward*, and *toward*, may be used either with or without the final *s*. *Onward* does not take the *s*.

**Age, four years of.**

See *Of*.

**Aggravate.**

The modern tendency is against the use of this word to mean *exasperate*, although old writers show many examples of its use in this sense, and in the sense of *to irritate* or *inflame physically*. Careful writers and speakers to-day apply it to conditions and diseases in the sense of *to make worse*. Thus we may *aggravate* a man's ill temper (make it worse) but not the man himself.

**Ago.**

The only distinction between *ago* and *since* that accords with the facts, is that *ago* looks from the present toward the past, whereas *since* looks from the past toward the present. This use is shown in such a sentence as "I spent my last dollar three days ago, and haven't earned another since." When *since* is used in the sense of *ago*, it is probably elliptical for, "I met him (it is now) three years since,"

or something of the sort. Either may be used to refer to a time only recently past, or long past.

Agreeable.

There is no authority for the use of *agreeable* as an adverb, as "agreeable to your specifications." *In accordance with*, or *agreeably with*, would be correct.

Agreeably disappointed.

See *Disappoint*.

Ain't.

This contraction is universally condemned. The proper contractions are:

DECLARATIVE

I'm not	We're not
You're not	You're not
He's not (she's, it's)	They're not

INTERROGATIVE

[	]	Aren't we?
Aren't you?		Aren't you?
Isn't he? (she, it)		Aren't they?

The temptation to use "ain't" arises from the fact that there is no proper contraction in the interrogative first person singular. *Ain't*, however, shows no signs of coming into good use. We must get along as best we can without it; usually the construction can be avoided. Instead of, "I'm improving, am I not?" we may say, "Don't you think I am improving?" See *Aren't I*.

There is no defense possible for the vulgar use of *ain't* for *hasn't* and *haven't*, as, "I ain't found no berries to-day," "They ain't seen us yet." When this is confused with *have* it is often pronounced *haint*.

### Alike.

With *alike*, *both* is redundant. The use of the two together leads to such absurdities as, "Nell and Ruth are both alike, especially Ruth." The logical absurdity of this sentence is not made defensible by the use of the construction in the Bible ("The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee"). This use of *alike* has become obsolete along with a number of others.

### All and Any.

These words are sometimes misused after the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives. After a superlative use *all*; as, "best of all." After a comparative, use *any* followed by *other* ("finer than any other") to exclude the object from its own class; it cannot be finer than itself.

### All.

All has many idiomatic and slangy uses, and uses of all shades between the two, many of which depend on its use in phrases as an intensive with a general idea of comprehensiveness, as in *all-righteous*, *all-glorious*. *All at once* and *all of a sudden* are idiomatic; that is, not according to rules of grammar, but universally accepted as good English. *All of a heap*, to express astonishment or dismay, is accepted.

for colloquial use. *All to the bad*, and *all to the good* are still slangy. *All in* is still slang, but it may ultimately prove as acceptable as *dead beat*, now not often heard nor often censured. *All right* is idiomatic on this side of the Atlantic. If you wish to avoid it as an Americanism, use *very well*. Remember, however, that *alright* is “one of illiteracy’s most legible autographs” (J. Erskine, *Written English*). *All the same* may be accepted as idiomatic, though it has a more colloquial flavor than *nevertheless* and *none the less*. *All-round* is acceptable in the United States for *all-around*. See *About*.

*Not* is sometimes misplaced after *all*. “All of us are not good,” ought to mean, “All of us are bad,” rather than, “Not all of us are good” (“Some of us are bad”).

*All* with personal pronouns, *you all*, *we all*, etc., is Southern dialect usage in the United States. *You all* might be a useful form to distinguish the singular *you* from the plural, but it is no more acceptable than the others. *All* in its usual meaning may follow *you* in such sentences as “I want you all to come.” See *All of them*.

The phrase *all over*, which the purists say should be *over all* (“over all the city”), ought to need no special defense, for *all* is here used in one of its most common meanings, *entirely, completely*. The phrase in which *all* is an adjective, *over all*, is preferable only when one wants a more formal phrase.

*All the further for as far as* (“This is all the further we can go,”) is vulgar and indefensible.

*All together* should never be confused with *alto-*

*gether.* In "Here we are, all together at last!" *altogether*, which means *entirely*, would be meaningless. There is no such word as *altogether*. Compare *already* and *all right*.

#### All of them.

The *of* in this phrase is sometimes called redundant, and such expressions as, "I have all these," and, "I have them all," are offered as substitutes. There are, however, constructions in which it seems difficult to avoid the phrase with *of*. "We all saw them all," is doubtless correct, but sounds awkward or provincial. *All of them* seems, too, to provide a distributive sense ("every one of them") not found in the other constructions. It is a comparatively modern construction, formed probably by association with such expressions as, *none of*, *some of*, *much of*, and the like. See *Both of them*.

#### All ready and Already.

The distinction between (1) *all* (*i. e.*, *every one* or *completely*) *prepared* and (2) *in anticipation* is sometimes hardly to be made—*e. g.*, "The regiments already in France." Where the distinction can be made: (1) is *all ready*; (2) is *already*. Where 1 is clearly the meaning, *already* is obsolete.

#### Allege.

The sense in which the word is misused is, *to assert as if able to prove (whether actually so able or not)*. In some such sense it was at one time freely used by newspapers as a sort of charm to

ward off libel suits, and at last became a mere variant of "say." Usually the meaning is carried better by *say*, *assert*, *affirm*, or *declare*.

#### Allow.

*Allow* is incorrectly used in the sense of *say*, as, "He allowed he was going to the village." It may be used to denote a reluctant admission, but not a voluntary assertion, as, "He paid me, I will allow, very generously."

#### Allow and Permit.

A practice may be *allowed* tacitly or openly by absence of opposition; *permission* implies sanction and approval.

#### Allow of.

*Allow* is correctly used intransitively followed by *of*, meaning *admit of*; "The concrete had hardened enough to allow of the mold being removed." See *Admit* and *Of*.

#### Allude.

One can *allude* to a thing only indirectly, as, "When he mentioned the white elephant, the speaker alluded to the purchase of the other mill." The word originally meant *to play* (upon words).

#### Allusion and Illusion.

*Allusion* means *indirect mention*; *illusion* means *deception*, or *deceptive perception by the senses*. The confusion between the two occurs only through carelessness.

### Alma Mater.

These words mean "fostering mother." As figuratively applied to schools, colleges, and universities, the phrase may easily become absurd, as, "My preparatory *alma mater*." It has now largely lost its original dignity and significance, and may well be avoided. See p. 14.

### Alms.

This is one of a list of apparent plurals (see *Amends*, *Eaves*, *Ethics*, *Riches*, *Mathematics*, and the like) which commonly take plural verbs.

### Alone.

*Alone* means *unaccompanied*; *only* means *sole*. *Alone* in the sense of *only* is now rare or obsolete. "Nux vomica alone will cure him," means that nux vomica will cure him unaided and unmixed. "Nux vomica only will cure him," means that nothing else can cure him. "Nux vomica will alone cure him," means the cure is the only service it will perform. "Nux vomica will cure him alone," means that it will not cure any one else. See also *Only*.

### Along.

Such an expression as, "I'll be along," is an American colloquialism. It usually means, "I will come soon," or, "I will follow after."

### Also.

With *and*, see *And*.

### Alternately, Alternative, Alternation.

*Alternative* should mean *a choice*. "We had no alternative," should mean that we had no choice,

that is, no *other* course. The meaning has, however, been more or less colloquially extended to mean a course of action, and is even applied to several (more than two) possibilities. But for the sake of precision and avoidance of criticism it is well to restrict the use of the word to the original meaning, *a choice*, and apply it to not more than two possibilities.

*Alternation* means “the action of two things succeeding each other by turns” (*Oxford Dictionary*). It is erroneously used of changes involving more than two things.

There is no sanction for the use of *alternately* as applied to the action of more than two things.

#### Although, Though, While.

*Although* and *though* are interchangeable in the sense of *notwithstanding, in spite of the fact that*. *While* (*q. v.*) means something different.

#### Altogether.

See *All*.

#### A.M.; P.M.

Either capitals or small letters may be used for these abbreviations, though modern usage tends toward capitals.

#### Amateur and Novice.

An *amateur* is a lover of a pursuit, following it not for gain. A *novice* is a beginner. A *novice* may be a professional, not an *amateur*. An *amateur* may have

followed the pursuit for a long time; may be anything but a *novice*.

### Ameliorate.

Objection to this word is based on the idea that it always carries a suggestion of pomposity. It means the same thing as *improve*, and the question may fairly be raised whether a sentence can be framed in which *ameliorate* is the better word.

### Amends.

This is properly a singular form (see *Eaves*, *Ethics*, *Riches*, *Mathematics*, etc.) "now always construed with a singular verb" (*Oxford Dictionary*). The fact is, it is seldom used as the subject of a verb, and seldom with the article, though one quotation has been found which shows "an amends." If we say, "The amends are sufficient," it might be technically incorrect, but would pass unchallenged. If we say, "The amends is sufficient," it would probably be challenged, but could be defended.

### Amid and Amidst.

The *Oxford Dictionary* says, "There is a tendency to use *amidst* more distributively than *amid*—e. g., of things scattered about, or a thing moving in the midst of others." Similar forms are *amongst*, *against*, *betwixt*, *whilst*; with the exception of *against* these are scarcely to be distinguished in usage from the forms without the *st*.

### An.

See *A*.

And.

*And* is a coordinating additive conjunction; that is, it may connect words, phrases, and clauses in the same construction (for example, two independent or two dependent clauses) without defining the relationship between them. It is misused by being made to do duty for hundreds of other connectives. It must serve for the adversative coordinating conjunctions (*but*, *yet*, *however*, *nevertheless*, and others)—“He said he would go, and he didn’t.” It is forced into service for all the subordinating conjunctions, whether of time, place, cause, purpose, reason, consequence, means, method, supposition, possibility, apprehension, doubt, question, omission, exception, exclusion, comparison, equality, proportion, illustration, representation, as well as those introducing relative, conditional, and concessional clauses. Such a sentence as “He came to the office, and got his book,” might be intended to express the purpose, the cause, the consequence, the time, the place, the reason, of the action; no one could tell with certainty from the mere words which the speaker meant.

*And* is misused in this fashion in such phrases as “try and do it,” “come and see me,” where it serves for *to* (“try to do it”). This usage can be defended as idiomatic—that is, it is very old, and very widespread, but it is always colloquial, and always illogical. Certainly no one could be accused of overprecision who should always prefer the infinitive construction, “come to see me.”

Both *try and* and *come and* are, of course, correct

where purpose is not the main idea of the second clause, as, "Won't you come and join our game?"

An indefensible use of *and* is its use to connect an independent clause with a dependent clause, as in the sentence, "It is a very useful tree, and which is found in every clime." If the second clause is dependent (subordinate), *which* is the proper connective ("a useful tree, which is found"). If the second clause is independent, *and* is the right connective ("the tree is useful, and is found"). As the clause cannot be both independent and dependent, both connectives cannot be used. This is sometimes called the "*and which* construction." It may usually be remedied by striking out the *and*. *And* is correctly used to join two relative clauses, as, "I bought the dog which he told me of, and which he was going to buy."

*And* is sometimes made to do duty for *or*, as, "A modern language like French and German."

*And* is always superfluous before *also*, which means the same thing; and before *therefore*, *consequently*, and other words which are already connectives, and cannot be made any more definitely so by the preceding *and*.

#### Anent.

This word cannot be used in prose or poetry without suggestion of affectation. Even metrically *about* is its exact equivalent.

#### Angry.

The modern tendency is to use *with* after angry rather than *at*. If there is any distinction it is that

one is angry *with* a person when the expression of the anger is indicated; angry *at* a person when the feeling is denoted rather than the expression.

#### Annual and Yearly.

These words may be used without discrimination; the best dictionaries use the one word to define the other.

#### Answer and Reply.

*Answer*, the purists tell us, should be distinguished from *reply*; but if the distinction has ever been made, it has never been made clear. We answer a charge, a letter, a question, a greeting, a door-bell, a shout. We reply to accusations, assertions, statements, arguments. We say, “Your reply does not answer the question,” but an answer need not always give satisfaction; it may be *a sign of any kind, made in response to or acknowledgment of any signal*. A reply, too, may be inarticulate: “Their howitzers replied to our musketry fire.” *Answer* meant originally something like “swear to,” “a solemn affirmation made to rebut a charge.” *Reply* in the beginning meant *retort* (fold or turn back). Each word has been spread over so wide a variety of meanings, and has encroached so broadly on the territory of the other, that the confusion is now complete; all dictionaries give *reply* as one of the meanings of *answer*, and *answer* as one of the meanings of *reply*.

#### Antecedents.

This may now be considered good in use as meaning *the events of a person's bygone history*. In 1841 it

was regarded as a French construction; in 1854 it was considered modern slang; ten years later it was used without apology by Cardinal Newman.

### Anticipate.

*Anticipate* does not mean merely *expect*, but rather, *experience beforehand, forecast, foretaste, take measures in advance of*. One who *expects* a shower may *anticipate* it by carrying an umbrella.

### Anxious.

*Anxious* means primarily *troubled or uneasy in mind about some uncertain event*. It is properly used in infinitive constructions (*anxious to do something*) only where eager anticipation is mingled with endeavor and a troubled mind as to the outcome of the endeavor. It is correct to say, "The Prince was anxious to take the fortress before it should be relieved," or, "I ran because I was anxious to catch the train." "I was anxious to receive an invitation" is a misuse of the word because the state is passive, not one of endeavor, and the outcome is (probably) trivial.

### Any.

The adverbial use of *any* in the sense of *at all*, as, "She isn't working *any*," had better be avoided. It has been in constant but questionable use in such constructions for five centuries, but has not received the sanction of the best writers.

For *Of any* see *Of*; *Any good* see *Good*. For *All and any* see *All*.

### Anybody.

Compounds formed with *body* are written as one word; those formed with *one* are written as two words. Words of both classes are construed with singular verbs and pronouns. "If this belongs to anybody present, let him claim it." "Everybody must show his ticket at the door."

### Anyhow.

This word has frequently been condemned as colloquial. Perhaps it has even yet a colloquial flavor, but it is certainly used to-day by careful writers. Acceptable substitutes are, *in any manner*, *in any event*, *at any rate*, *be that as it may*.

### Any place.

This needs a preposition if it is to be used as an adverbial phrase,—*in any place*, *at any place*. It is incorrect to say, "I could not find him any place," but correct to say, "I could not find him at (or *in*) any place" or "in any place I visited (or entered)."

### Anyway.

As an adverbial conjunction meaning *at any rate*, *anyway* is in reputable use in both England and the United States. It is somewhat less formal than *at any rate*, but there is little to choose between them.

### Anyways.

This is provincial or illiterate as an adverbial conjunction meaning *at all events*. It is allowable as an adverb meaning *in any way*. It is incorrectly

used in "Well, anyways, I wouldn't go with him." "Nor was such interference anyways injurious" (DeQuincey) is correct.

A one.

See *One*.

Apparent.

The use of this word to denote *that which appears and is not* is given by the *Oxford Dictionary*, as, "the commonest sense now, but treated as novel in 1645." The objection to the use of the word in this sense would seem to be largely traditional.

Appear.

The distinction between *appear* and *seem*, to the effect that "what *seems* is in the mind; what *appears* is external," is purely theoretical. If the distinction could be enforced it might be worth making for the sake of precision.

Appertain and Pertain.

These words are interchangeable in meaning.

Appreciate.

Primarily *appreciate* means to estimate aright; "I appreciate his ill-will," would mean that I do not underestimate it. This meaning has been extended to what is to-day its more general sense, *to esteem adequately or highly*. It may also mean *to raise in value* and *to rise in value*; these two meanings are said to have been long in use in the United States. "Appreciate in value" is, then, correct.

**Apprehend.**

“We apprehend many truths which we do not comprehend” (Trench). *Apprehend* should not be used to mean merely *to think*, but rather “to understand (a thing to be so and so); to conceive, consider, view (it) as” (*Oxford Dictionary*). “I apprehend that I shall go to bed,” would be absurd.

**Approach.**

The use of this word for *address*, *memorialize*, *appeal to*, or *petition* is condemned. It would seem to be allowable, however, in a figurative sense meaning to *draw near* with the idea of entering into personal relations, and so *to begin more or less distantly on a subject*. The figure may come from the use of the term in fortifications meaning to *work forward toward* by means of intrenchments.

**Approve of.**

See *Of*.

**Apt.**

*Apt* should be distinguished from *likely* and *liable*. *Apt* carries implication of fitness (*calculated to*, *quick to*, *ready to*). *Likely* carries implication of probability. *Liable* carries implication of unpleasant or disastrous consequences. A man who is *apt* to learn is *likely* to succeed in his studies, and, possibly, *liable* to overwork. *Liable to* means *subject to*. *Liable for* means *responsible for*. “He is liable for the entire amount, and liable to imprisonment if he does not pay.” *Liable* is now generally considered

correct with the infinitive (*liable to do*), though some authorities still condemn it.

**Are.**

In such expressions as “twice one are two” either the singular or the plural verb may be used. Usage is evenly divided.

**Aren’t I.**

*Aren’t I* for *am I not* is an ungrammatical colloquialism said to be in better standing in England than in the United States. See *Ain’t*.

**Around.**

See *About*.

**Arrived safe.**

“*I arrived safe*” is correct as meaning “I was safe when I arrived.” “*I arrived safely*” would mean “I arrived in a safe manner.” Each is correct for the idea it conveys.

**Article, repetition of.**

See *A*.

**Artist.**

Strictly, an *artist* is any one who practises one or more of the fine arts. The word is widely used to distinguish one who practises a pictorial art (painter) from one who applies paint to surfaces without art. Improperly, colloquially, jocosely, or hyperbolically, it is used of an artisan or craftsman, as a barber, a cook, a tailor, a bootblack.

As.

As has sometimes been called a "tricky" word. This is because it has so many different uses and meanings (the *Oxford Dictionary* distinguishes no less than forty-one) that there is scarcely a use one can put it to in which it cannot be misinterpreted. Only the commoner errors in its use need be discussed here.

There is no sanction for the use of *as* in such expressions as, "I don't know *as* I shall," "Not *as* I know of." These should, of course, be, "I don't know *that* I shall," "Not *that* I know." Some dialects expand it to *as how*,—"He said *as how* he wouldn't go."

*So* stands as the correlative of *as* usually in negative constructions,— "Not so black *as* he is painted," "Hardly so good *as* one could wish." Modern usage tends to make this use obligatory. It is used in certain affirmative constructions, such as, "To call it by so harsh a name *as* treason," "To spurn a heart so full of love *as* mine," "It was a quiet life for a time so full of turmoil *as* his." It has been pointed out that the negative construction is, in a sense, not a comparison, in that it is always a comparison (or contrast) of unequals. The affirmative constructions, too, are not true comparisons; they merely suggest comparison in order to lay emphasis on some quality or quantity, as does the colloquial *so* without *as*,—"I am *so* glad!" Note that to use *as* would be incorrect only in that it would change the meaning; "To spurn a heart so full of love *as* mine," means "To spurn my heart, full of love as it

is." "To spurn a heart as full of love as mine," means "To spurn any heart (not necessarily mine) that is as full of love as mine is." Thus we might formulate the rule: use *so* correlative with *as* in constructions which are comparisons in form, but which really express contrast or emphasis.

The second *as* in these comparative constructions is sometimes felt to have the force of a preposition, and is made to take a direct object in the objective (accusative) case, as, "I am as good as him." If the sentence is given its full form, it becomes apparent that the pronoun should be in the nominative: "I am as good as he (is)," "I went as far as he (went)." The pronoun should be in the nominative case because it is the subject of the verb which is not expressed.

*Like* and *as* are most frequently misused in sentences expressing comparison which take such forms as "Try to do it as I do" and "Act like me." The rule is a simple one; where the sentence has two finite verbs the comparison, containing the second verb, should be introduced by *as*,—*as I do*. Where the comparison is with a substantive, use *like*,—*like me*. *Like* in such constructions is an adverbial preposition, and *me* is its object (see *Like*). It cannot be made to act as a conjunction connecting the two clauses of the sentence (*try to do it* and *I do*). *As* is a conjunction, and is properly used to connect clauses. Note that the nominative case (*he*) follows *as*, as the subject of the following verb expressed or understood; whereas the objective case follows *like* (*like him*), from the effect of the prepositional force of *like*.

As should be distinguished from *because* in introducing clauses of reason. In this construction, *as* means *inasmuch as*, *in consideration of the fact that*. “As I was hungry, I ate a hearty dinner,” is incorrect because it is not *in consideration of the fact that* he is hungry, but *because* he is hungry, that the speaker eats heartily. “I thought I might as well go on, as I had already gone so far,” is correct.

*As though* has been challenged on the ground that it is illogical; if the supposed ellipsis is filled in,—“as (it would be) though”—” the phrase means nearly the opposite of “as (it would be) if.” Logical or not, the phrase has been continuously in good use for at least six centuries, and shows no signs of going out of favor.

*As if* is always followed by the subjunctive. The choice between indicative and subjunctive in English nearly always depends on the degree of remoteness from actuality to be implied or expressed. *As if* always expresses remoteness from actuality; therefore it always takes the subjunctive. On similar grounds, the expression *be that as it will* is always incorrect; it should always be *be that as it may*.

*As long as* is a legitimate phrase, though a figurative use of the words, in the sense of *inasmuch as*. Logical or not, it is an established idiom. *As*, however, is shorter and means the same.

*As to* is frequently redundant before *whether*. “I asked him as to whether he was coming,” ought to mean “I made general inquiries covering the whole question whether he was coming.” As commonly used, it means no more than “I asked him

whether he was coming." "The discussion was held to one point: as to whether the club should join the national organization," is correct.

*As follows* is idiomatic, be the subsequent matter singular or plural. "The articles of the warrant are as follow," is correct, but over-scrupulous.

*As* should not be omitted after *regard*,—"I do not regard that necessary." Here, perhaps, the error is confusion of *regard* with *consider*, which does not require *as*.

*As* should not be made to stand for *such as*: "There were old-fashioned mantelpieces, too, as we have at home."

Ask of.

See *Of*.

Assurance and Insurance.

*Assurance* is the older term and is still correct, but modern American usage prefers *insurance*.

At.

*At* is idiomatic in various adverbial phrases which would logically call for *by* or *in*, as, *at auction*, *at night*, *at home*, *at rest*.

Whether we say a person *lives at* or *lives in* a given town or city depends on whether we think of his location as *at* a point or *in* a recognizable area. Ordinarily we speak of a man as living *at* a certain village, or *in* a certain city. When we speak of living *in* the village, we are thinking of it as an area rather than as a mere location or point.

**At all.**

*At all* has been condemned as superfluous in such sentences as, “There is no use at all in your going,” “I do not know him at all.” Here it clearly means *whatever*, or, *to any extent*, and in this sense is idiomatic,—perhaps slightly colloquial.

**At best.**

*At best* for *at the best* has, perhaps, not been in good use so long as *at least*, but it is old enough to be acceptable.

**At dinner.**

We have guests (or company) *at dinner*; roast beef *for dinner*. If we say, “We had the minister *for dinner* Sunday,” we acknowledge ourselves cannibals.

**At fault.**

See *Fault*.

**At least.**

*At least* should ordinarily stand immediately before the word or phrase which it limits. In case there can be no ambiguity it may immediately follow the word or phrase which it limits. “The Bostonians *at least* speak with precision” (whatever else they may do in less careful manner). “*At least* the Bostonians speak with precision” (others are careless). “*It will satisfy John at least*” (whatever its effect on others).

The use of *at least* may be defined by commas: “*For me, at least this will serve*” (this if nothing

more). “For me, at least, this will serve” (for me if for no one else). See also *Only*.

### At length.

*At length* should be used to denote some degree of continuance; *at last*, to denote finality or completion. “At length we grew weary of our journey, but at last reached the city.”

### At that.

*At that* appended for emphasis to the last clause of a sentence (“A good suit, and cheap at that”) receives no further condemnation from the *Oxford Dictionary* than the statement that it was originally American slang, and probably sprang from some such expression as “cheap at that (price).” It is condemned by some American authorities as vulgar. As often as not it is a useless appendix that will bear excision.

### Audience.

An *audience* is, properly speaking, an assembly that has come to hear something. *Spectators* assemble to see something. *The crowd* is a highly colloquial term for either sort of assembly. See also *Fan*.

### Authentic.

*Authentic* means possessing authority; *genuine* means not counterfeit. The two words should be distinguished except when the supposed counterfeit is so because it assumes authority which it has not.

**Authoress.**

*Authoress*, *poetess*, and the like, are awkward and nearly useless forms. Such terms as *author* and *poet* may be used without distinction of sex.

**Avenge.**

*Avenge* differs from *revenge* in that it has in it more of the idea of justice, public or private. One *avenges* another or oneself by way of retributive punishment. One *revenges* oneself *on* another by inflicting counter-injury justly or unjustly.

**Averse.**

*Averse* may be used correctly with either *to* or *from*. The modern tendency is said to be toward *to* both in England and the United States.

**Avocation.**

This word properly means a minor or secondary occupation. To apply it to one's ordinary occupation is to use it improperly.

**Awake.**

See *Wake*.

**Awful.**

*Awful* does not mean *ugly* or *disagreeable* ("Isn't it awful?"). *Awfully* does not mean *very* ("I am awfully glad"). Though in speech the terms are universally used in these senses, they are universally condemned as symptoms of deficient vocabulary. In the popular sense, *horrid* is an exact synonym of *awful*, in so far as either has any exact sense.

**Ay and Aye.**

*Ay* (pronounced “eye”) means yes, as in the familiar phrase, “The ayes have it.” *Aye* rhymes with *hay* and means *ever* or *always*.

## B

**Back.**

*Be back* (“I’ll be back in half an hour”) is allowable to denote the state of having returned rather than the act of returning. *Back from* is said to be colloquial; but it is difficult to see how, if we are to use *back* with verbs of motion, or with verbs like *get* and *be*, we can otherwise indicate the point of departure.

*Back of*, meaning *behind*, is an Americanism, and though it is in fairly good use in the United States it is well to avoid it since it leads to such barbarisms as *side of* and *in back of*. *Behind* always supplies the same meaning.

**Backwards.**

See *Afterward*.

**Bad.**

After verbs signifying *to look*, *seem*, *appear*, *feel*, *taste*, *smell*, *sound*, and the like the adjective is used instead of the adverb. “You look bad” is correct unless the meaning is “You perform badly the act of looking.” *Feel badly* is often used when the trouble is physical, and *feel bad* when it is mental.

The use of *bad* in the sense of *ill* is at best highly

colloquial; in the sense of *severe*, as, "a bad cold," it is more nearly admissible. *Badly* does not mean *very much*, as in the sentence, "I want it badly." See also *Worse*.

### Bad grammar.

The expression *bad grammar* is, strictly speaking, a logical absurdity when used to mean *ungrammatical* or an *ungrammatical construction*.

### Bade.

*Bade* is the preterit tense of the verb *to bid*; *bidden* is the past participle.

### Balance.

*Balance* in the sense of *the remainder, the rest*, is a piece of American commercial slang. Its proper commercial meaning is, "the difference between the two sides of an account, or between two accounts."

### Banister.

Originally a corruption of *baluster*, but now in good use.

### Bathos and Pathos.

*Bathos* means a *ludicrous descent from the elevated to the commonplace*. *Pathos* is the *quality that excites pity or sadness*.

### Be.

See *Is*, *Was*, and other forms of the verb, also *Been to* and *Were best*.

**Beat.**

*Beat* in the sense of *defeat in battle* or in any sort of contest has been idiomatic in English for nearly five centuries. For *dead beat* see *all in* (under *All*).

**Because.**

*Because* should not be used instead of *that* to introduce a predicate substantive clause giving a reason. “The reason was that I didn’t have enough money.”

See *As* and *Since*.

**Because of.**

*Because of* is an adverbial modifier; *due to* is an adjective modifier. “The disturbance is due to the discontent of the people; the people are discontented because of high taxes.”

**Been to.**

The *Oxford Dictionary* says that the verb *to be* was used “idiomatically in past, now only in perfect and pluperfect tenses with *to* and a substantive or infinitive of purpose.” (“I have already been to the museum.” “I had been to see Salvini.”) In the seventeenth century we find such constructions with the preterit: “I was yesterday to wait upon Sir Herbert Croft” (Howell, *Letters*, 1645). This is now vulgar.

**Beg to.**

*Beg to* (or *that*) for *beg leave to* (or *that*) is good idiomatic English.

**Begin.**

*Begin* is preferable to *commence* as applied to any but large or important undertakings. One who *commences* his dinner would seem to overestimate the importance of the dinner. See section on *Simplicity*, p. 14.

*Began* is the preterit tense of the verb *begin*; *begun* is the past participle. "I began my work before he had begun to think of his." See also *Start*.

**Behalf.**

Careless speakers often fail to make the distinction between *on behalf of*, which means *in the name of*, *as representative of*, and *in behalf of*, which means *for the benefit of*. "On behalf of Mr. Smith, who was absent, Mr. Jones asked for a stay of the proceedings." "He asked for contributions in behalf of the Armenians."

**Being.**

See *Is being*.

**Belittle.**

This word seems to be of American origin, but is now in good use on both sides of the Atlantic, meaning *to make small, deprecate, disparage*.

**Belong.**

*Belong* in absolute sense not followed by a preposition, as, "Do you belong?" meaning *are you a member*, is incorrect.

**Beneficent.**

*Beneficent* means *doing good* and is to be distinguished from benevolent, which means *well-wishing*.

**Beside and Besides.**

Modern usage tends to distinguish between these two, using *beside* to mean *at the side of* or *near by*: and *besides* to mean *in addition*, *moreover*, *otherwise*, *else*. “There could not have been any one beside me, for there was no one in the house besides me.” The two may, however, be correctly used as interchangeable in many senses. We may say “and many more beside,” but we do not say “he sat besides me.”

**Best.**

See *At best*.

**Bestead.**

This word has been in good use since the fourteenth century as meaning *beset by* (enemies, fears, dangers, and the like).

**Better.**

The use of *better* to mean *more*, in such expressions as “Worth twenty pounds and better,” is set down as colloquial by some grammarians, but not as a rule by the dictionary-makers. It is very old usage; the phrase quoted above goes back to 1587.

**Between.**

The use of *between* as distinguished from *among* cannot be determined solely on the basis of the

number of objects involved. The *Oxford Dictionary* says of *between*: "It is still the only word available to express the relation of a thing to many surrounding things severally and individually, *among* expressing a relation to them collectively and vaguely: we should not say, 'The space lying among the three points' or 'a treaty among the three powers' . . . or 'to insert a needle among the closed petals of a flower.'"

Such an expression as "between every row" is illogical, but is so common in every-day speech as to be almost idiomatic.

**Beware of.**

See *Of*.

**Bid.**

Modern difficulties in meanings and forms of *bid* come from the fact that in Anglo-Saxon there were two distinct verbs more similar in form than in meaning, which in English were hopelessly confused by the middle of the sixteenth century. It is perhaps enough to say that *bid* as a preterit is now commonly used only when the word is used in such expressions as *bid at an auction*, *bid for patronage*, and the like. In the sense of *commanded*, "He bid the servant show me the door," we nowadays prefer *bade*.

**Blame.**

*Blame it on* for *accuse* is provincial or at best highly colloquial. A somewhat similar use of the

word *blame*, now nearly obsolete, is shown in the sentence, "He is blamed of avarice."

### Bleachers.

See "Guiding Principles," p. 10.

### Bluff.

American dictionaries accept the phrase *bluff off* ("Not to bluff her off,—let her talk on") as if it came from the adjective *bluff*, meaning *rough and hearty*, defining it as *to repel or deter by a bold, confident manner*. At the same time they condemn the word in the ordinary modern sense, *to impose upon* in various ways, as colloquial or slang. The *Oxford Dictionary* gives the word in its modern sense without stigma, and shows that it was used usually with quotation marks before 1890, and for the most part without them since that time. It seems to have meant first (in the eighteenth century) a horse's blinder, next to *hoodwink*, to *offer an excuse*. Then it became the name of a game of cards, whence it came into slang use as meaning *to impose upon by giving a false idea of one's resources*. It has still a certain colloquial flavor, but is widely used without apology.

### Boom.

As a noun or verb denoting *sudden activity*, *boom* is a word of American origin. It might need some explanation or apology in England, but in the United States it has no restriction except its strong suggestion of business or politics.

**Booze.**

See "Guiding Principles," p. 7. As a noun or verb meaning *drink*, *boos* or *bouse* was in good use in the fourteenth century, but it was slang in the seventeenth century, and has been so ever since.

**Boss.**

*Boss* is still colloquial in the United States as meaning an *overseer*, *superintendent*, or *manager*, but is used without apology in the special sense of a *more or less disreputable political leader*.

**Both.**

*Both* is redundant in such a sentence as "They both resemble each other." It seems redundant also in the sentence, "He performed the duties both of the president and the secretary." This, however, is probably elliptical for "He performs the duties of both officers, namely, the president and the secretary."

The use of *both* has always been extended to more than two objects. "To whom both heaven and earth and sea is seen" (Chaucer). "He prayeth well who loveth well, both man and bird and beast" (Coleridge).

*Both . . . and* should be so placed in the sentence that there can be no doubt as to the meaning. "We are better equipped now both with regard to money and supplies," is incorrect because it correlates *with regard to* and *supplies*. It probably means, "We are better equipped now with regard to both money and supplies," but might mean, "We are better

equipped now both with regard to money and in the matter of supplies." See *Not only . . . but also.*

Both of them.

No one, not even the most careful speaker, need avoid this phrase. See *All of them.*

Bound.

We have confusion among certain meanings of *bound* because of its double origin,—or rather from the fact that it represents two different words, the past tense and participle of the verb *to bind*, and also the obsolete verb *boun, get ready* ("Busk ye and boun ye, my merry men all"). This survives in a derived meaning, *having one's course directed*, as of ships "bound for Australia," or of persons "bound for a day's pleasure." Thus *destined* in the sense of *directed to a certain destination*, is a legitimate meaning of *bound* from *boun*, but the dictionaries tell us that *bound* meaning *destined* in the sense of *fated* or *foredoomed*, as in *bound to fail*, is colloquial usage. The distinction between the two senses of *destined*, however, is not one that the unlettered public could be expected to make. Add to this the sense of *firm adhesion* coming from the other verb, *to bind*, so easily applicable to the continuance of a ship on her course, and the meanings *certain to*, and *destined* seem inevitable for *bound*, though the dictionaries still record both as colloquial. If we wish to avoid the censure of those who talk by the dictionary, we may, then, confine *bound* in these meanings to colloquial use.

**Bountiful.**

This word means primarily *graciously liberal, generous*. A careful speaker or writer will distinguish it from *abundant* and *plentiful*.

**Boyish.**

See *Childlike*.

**Bran-new.**

*Brand-new* is the older form (probably meaning "new as a brand out of the fire," compare *fire-new*), but *bran-new* is the commoner form to-day. Some grammarians condemn both forms as colloquial, but the expression is an old and well-established phrase that is likely to hold its place.

**Brethren.**

This is a plural of *brother* used almost entirely to-day in a figurative sense, as of the members of a church or a fraternity. *Brothers* can be used in either a literal or a figurative sense. Compare *mettle* and *metal*, originally the same word, one spelling of which (*mettle*) is now restricted to the figurative sense, the other to the literal.

**Bring.**

*Bring* means *to cause to come along with oneself*; the motion is supposed to be toward the place where one already is. *Take* implies motion away from. *Fetch* means *go and bring back*.

*Carry* has no implication of either location or direction, but denotes merely conveyance.

**Bug.**

*Bug* is not the exact equivalent of *insect*. In so far as it is in good use it applies chiefly to beetles, grubs, and larvæ. It is an old word now become largely provincial, especially in the United States.

**Bulk.**

*Bulk* has been in good use as meaning *the greater part* ("the bulk of his fortune") nearly as long as it has been in use in any sense in English.

**Bunch.**

Writers on the use of words are fond of quoting the following illustration of the use of various collective nouns. They uniformly omit to name the author:

A flock of girls is called a bevy; a bevy of wolves a pack; a pack of thieves a gang; a gang of angels a host; a host of porpoises a shoal; a shoal of buffalo a herd; a herd of children a troop; a troop of partridges a covey; a covey of beauties a galaxy; a galaxy of ruffians a horde; a horde of rubbish a heap; a heap of oxen a drove; a drove of blackguards a mob; a mob of whales a school; a school of worshipers a congregation; a congregation of engineers a corps; a corps of robbers a band; a band of locusts a swarm; a swarm of people a crowd.

Current American idiom simplifies all this; the word *bunch* covers everything. It was perhaps originally the cow-punchers' term for a flock or herd of any size, "a bunch of steers," by them slangily extended to other things, and now in national but by no means reputable use. It fits everything so

easily that it fits nothing well, but its convenience as obviating the necessity of selection may lead to its ultimate acceptance. At present it is not heard on the lips of the fastidious.

### Burgle.

This word was formed jocosely, as if the noun *burglar* came from a verb *to burgle*. W. S. Gilbert gave it currency in the song in "The Pirates of Penzance":

When the enterprising burglar's not a-burgling,  
And the cutthroat isn't occupied in crime,  
He loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling,  
And listen to the merry linnet's chime.

*Burglarize* is also condemned as a useless invention of newspaper writers. *Rob* is better.

### But.

*But* is misused nearly as much as *and*, and for nearly the same reason; the two are the only connectives found in the most limited vocabularies, where they must do duty for all the others. See *And*.

*But* is sometimes misused for *and*. "Poor but honest" implies that it is unusual to find one who is poor *and* honest. In such phrases there is danger in the implication; what does "old but respectable" or "homely but kind" mean?

The misuse of *but* for *and* arises from the lack of clear thinking. Other difficulties arise from a real confusion among the different meanings of the word,

and a lack of any definite boundary between grammar and idiom in some of its uses. The facts may be stated briefly:

In negative constructions after *doubt* and many similar verbs, either *but* or *but that* may be used; modern usage tends toward *but* as more logical; *but that*, however, is idiomatic. Thus we say, "I do not doubt but (or *but that*) he will come." Similar constructions occur with verbs of fearing, with *despair*, *make no question*, *scruple*, and the like; after *not say*, *think*, *conceive*, *conclude*, *believe*, *know*, *see*, *be sure*, *persuade*, and the like; and a variety of other constructions more easily exemplified than described, as, "It never rains but (that) it pours," "No lane so long but (that) it has its turning," and others.

In all these constructions *but what* is incorrect. *But what* means *except that which*, and is correctly used in the sentence "I escaped with nothing but what I had on."

The pronoun following *but* may be either accusative or nominative in case, according as one thinks of it as the object of *but* (as a preposition) or the subject of the following verb (introduced by *but* as an adversative connective). Thus we may say, "There is no one at home but me," in which *me* is the object of the preposition *but*, meaning *except*. Or we may say, "There is no one at home but I (am at home)." Modern usage prefers "but me" as more logical, and the famous lines from "Casabianca," about which argument has crackled as fiercely as ever the flames did about the devoted boy, are now

usually written, "Whence all but him had fled," however Mrs. Hemans may have written them.

There the case may rest except for those readers who wish, either as an aid to memory or as a salve to curiosity, for a discussion of the principles involved.

*But* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *be-utan*, *with-out*, *on the outside of*. This meaning survives in the Scotch *but and ben*, *outside and inside* (rooms of a cottage). Next it comes to mean *except* (as *without* sometimes does colloquially or in dialect). It becomes a negative relative in certain negative and interrogative constructions, and with certain negative and interrogative verbs, meaning *that . . . not*, or *who . . . not*. It is an adversative conjunction, introducing a statement contrary to, or contrasting with, the preceding one. It has many shades of meaning, and many uses, but these are the ones from which the difficult cases arise.

The confusion in such constructions as "all but him" is the confusion between the prepositional *but* and the adversative conjunction. It comes the more easily from the fact that with words other than inflected pronouns we are not conscious of the case of the noun, as, "Everybody but John went home." Again, the vulgar use of the accusative pronouns for the nominative ("Me and him went") makes it uncertain whether *everybody but me* is not a vulgar error when in such a sentence as "Everybody else went, but I stayed" it is rightly (as a conjunction) followed by the nominative.

More difficult constructions to analyze are those

in which *but* has the force of a negative relative, *that . . . not*. "There is scarce a field hereabouts but grows them" means "There is scarce a field hereabouts that grows them not." It is because of this negative force of *but* that it is incorrectly used in certain constructions in which two negatives are used to make an affirmative, as *not improbable, not impossible*, and the like. "It is not impossible but that I may" is incorrect because with the two negatives already in the construction, the additional one in *but* makes confusion. With one negative, *but* makes an affirmative; "I doubt not but he will come" means "I trust he will come." Now when the grammarian tells us dogmatically that "*but* is always superfluous when used with *doubt*," the learner is sometimes silenced, but not convinced; he feels that there is a difference between "I do not doubt that he will come" and "I do not doubt but that he will come." There is a difference, not in meaning, but in the way the meaning is conveyed. "I do not doubt that he will come" expresses certainty by doubting the contrary; "I might doubt if you told me that he would *not* come, but not if you tell me that he *will*." "I do not doubt but that he will come" expresses the affirmative by a double negative (*but* meaning *that . . . not*); "I do not doubt that he will not come; on the contrary, I am sure he will."

By.

"By returning it to this address," reads the advertisement, "the finder will be suitably rewarded."

Not unless virtue is its own reward. The advertiser means, "If the finder will return it—." The act of returning is not the reward held out.

*By* used with names ("a man by the name of Jones") is ordinarily the same as *of* ("a man of the name of Jones"). If there is any difference, *by* indicates the name we know him by or the name he "goes by," whether it is really his name or not,— "A man of the name of Rabinowitch who goes by the name of Robinson."

*By* cannot be made to serve for *according to*. "By the theory of poetry just given, immediate pleasure must be given." The writer meant, "According to the theory just explained, poetry must give immediate pleasure."

*By* and *with* are both used after passive verbs, *by* usually to denote the agent or doer, *with* to denote means or instrument,— "It was made with a chisel by the carpenter." Where agent and instrument are not clearly distinguished, we use *by*; as, "goes by electricity," "heated by steam," "struck by lightning," "overturned by the wind."

*Bye* is a variant spelling of *by* except in *good-bye*, which is supposed to be a contraction of "God be with you (or ye)." *Bye* meaning *by* is now rare or obsolete.

## C

Calculate.

*Calculate* should not be used for *expect* or *opine*. It is in this sense an American provincialism.

*Calculate* is correctly used in the sense of *devised*

*with forethought for a purpose, fitted, likely to, most commonly in the past participle calculated.* Some objection to this has been made of late, but it has been considered good from Defoe's time to our own.

### Caliber.

*Caliber* is the diameter of the bore of a gun. If applied figuratively to other things the original meaning should be kept in one's mind. Such an expression as "These poems are of high caliber" is palpably absurd.

### Call down.

This phrase may be said to have passed from slang to colloquial usage; it is probably on its way to universal acceptance. The language would seem to be well equipped without it, for we have *admonish, blame, censure, chide, condemn, expostulate with, find fault with, reprimand, reproach, take to task, upbraid, rebuke*, expressing many shades of meaning. But *call down* usually means *take to task* or *call to account*, and is shorter than either.

### Came near.

*Came near* for *almost*, as, "He came near to missing his train," is perhaps idiomatic, but has a highly colloquial flavor.

### Can.

The principal distinction between *can* and *may* is too often disregarded in speech. "May I go?" is, of course, the correct form for asking permission. "Can I go?" raises the question of ability or pos-

sibility. *Can* is perhaps correctly used in inquiring for a person on whom one is calling ("Can I see him?") where the question is really one of possibility, —not, to be sure, a question of the speaker's eyesight, but of the other man's engagements.

#### Cannot but.

We are told that such an expression as "I cannot but think," meaning, "I must think," is illogical; "I can but think" means "I must think," therefore "I cannot but think" must mean the opposite. If the phrase is illogical it certainly is idiomatic. So is "I cannot help but think," which is often condemned as a confusion of "I can but think," and "I cannot help thinking." All three expressions are probably elliptical; as:

I can (do naught) but think.

I cannot (do aught) but think.

I cannot help (thinking) but (I must) think.

If so, one is no more logical or illogical than another. The simplest way is to accept them all as idioms.

#### Can't hardly.

*Hardly*, *scarcely*, and similar words often have the force of negatives. "I can hardly do it" means "I can do it only with difficulty, if at all." *Can't hardly* is not in good use, probably because it would be ambiguous. "I cannot do it with difficulty" might, if it meant anything, mean either "I can do it without difficulty" or "I cannot do it at all."

#### Can't seem.

See *Seem*.

**Capacious.**

*Capacious* does not mean merely *large*, but *large with reference to holding or carrying*. A hole in the ground might be described as *capacious*; a hole in a pocket or bag would be properly described as *large* or *wide*.

**Caption.**

The use of this word to mean the *heading* of a chapter or newspaper article is set down as an Americanism. The word is in good use in this sense in the United States.

**Carry.**

See *Bring*.

**Casket.**

*Casket* for *coffin* is an Americanism. It is now in fairly good use, but open to objection according to the principle of simplicity. See p. 14.

**Casualty.**

We should distinguish carefully, both by eye and by ear, between this word and *casualty* (*casualness*) and *causality* (*law of causation*). *Casualty* is almost synonymous with *accident*, except that it applies to more serious occurrences. A *casualty*, like an *accident*, happens without intention and implies in addition an element of fate or chance. Unlike the *accident*, the *casualty* has no assignable cause.

**Catch.**

*Catch* in the sense of *reach* or *overtake*, as, "catch a train," is modern, but now widely accepted. *Catch*

*on* meaning *grasp* or *understand* (cf. *apprehend*) met with some acceptance in dignified use in England, but has nearly disappeared here.

### Cemetery.

This word is now accepted as meaning a *burial-ground*, but is obsolete as meaning a *churchyard*.

### Center.

*Center* is now widely used for *middle*, and applied to a line instead of a point; as, "The center aisle." The distinction between *center* and *middle* is worth making, however, for the sake of precision.

### Certain.

*Certain* as an adverb instead of *certainly* is obsolete. *For certain* is found only in dialect.

### Character.

This word has been in reputable use for at least two centuries as meaning *reputation*, and for about the same length of time as meaning *a recommendation* or *testimonial*.

### Cheap.

*Cheap* does not merely mean *low priced*, but bearing a *low price in proportion to intrinsic worth*. The meaning *worthless* or *paltry* is figurative.

### Chiefest.

The adjective *chief* can be compared only when it is used in the loose sense of *prominent* or *leading*. See *Perfect*, *Unique*, etc.

### Childlike.

We use *childlike* to denote the qualities of a child that we like, notably frankness and innocence. *Childish* expresses less desirable qualities, weakness, puerility. Note a similar difference between other adjectives formed with different suffixes, such as *womanish* and *womanly*, *mannish* and *manly*. *Boyish* and *girlish* do not necessarily imply undesirable qualities.

### Choose.

*Choose* is allowable as “little more than an equivalent of *to will, to wish*.” It is vulgar in the sense of *to wish to have, to want*. It is correctly used in “He did not choose to speak to her in public.” It is vulgar in “I don’t choose any.”

### Citizen.

A *citizen* is not merely a *person* but a *person who has rights or privileges as a member of a state*.

### Claim.

*Claim* means, among other things, *to assert as one’s own, to affirm one’s possession of*. It is gaining ground in the colloquial American sense of *contend, maintain, or assert*. The New York *Evening Post*, for example, tells its reporters, “*Claim* is good as an alternative for *assert*.”

### Clear.

*Clear* is obsolete in ordinary senses of *completely*; we do not, for example, say, “I have clear finished.”

*Clean*, however, in its adverbial use, is defined as used without restriction to mean *completely, outright*. Both are most used to-day in phrases such as, *clear through, clean gone*, and the like. Some American authorities call these colloquial.

### Clever.

*Clever* in the sense of *good-natured, amiable, or obliging* is a piece of American slang now nearly obsolete. In general the word should apply more to physical skill and adroitness than to mental dexterity.

### Climb down.

Though *climb* commonly implies ascent, *climb down* has been in use since 1300.

### Combine.

*Combine* as a noun meaning *combination* was probably devised by writers of newspaper headlines to fit their spaces. It is a bit of newspaper and political slang.

### Come and go.

The choice between *come* and *go* in such a sentence as "I will come to your office the next time I go down-town" depends on whether the reader is thinking of motion toward the place he intends to approach or motion away from the place he is leaving. The choice depends not on the form of the sentence, but on the idea to be expressed. *Come over* for *come to see me* is good familiar or colloquial diction, but avoided in dignified speech.

Come and see me.

See *And*.

Commence.

See *Begin*.

Common.

*Common* as an abstract substantive has been used from Shakespeare's time or earlier in such phrases as *above common*, *beyond common*. Some recent critics challenge it in certain phrases with *than*; *better than common*, *more than common*. It would seem, however, no more colloquial here than in the universally accepted phrase *out of the common* (unusual), in which it has exactly the same meaning.

Commonly.

*Commonly* applies to actions which are common to all; *frequently* to an action that is repeated at short intervals; *generally* applies to actions which are done by a large number of persons, or as a custom by one person. *Usually* means *customarily* or *habitually*.

Company at dinner.

See *At*.

Compare.

It has been said that we use *compare with* when the relative merits of the things compared are under discussion; and *compare to* in discussing similarity or dissimilarity. (See *Like*.) In so far as past usage shows any distinction between the two constructions, it is made on some such basis.

**Compensate.**

Modern usage demands that *compensate* be followed by *for*, as, "compensate for the want," not merely "compensate the want."

**Complacent.**

This word is sometimes scarcely to be distinguished from *complaisant*. Both come from the same Latin word through different channels. *Complacent* means *feeling or showing satisfaction*, especially in oneself. *Complaisant* means *obliging, politely agreeable, yielding*.

**Complected.**

*Complected* is dialect or colloquial usage in the United States. *Complexioned*, a more regular formation, is in good use in the same sense.

**Complete.**

In ordinary usage *complete* is not distinguished from *finished*. On the basis of derivation *complete* may be said to mean *to make perfect; finish, to bring to an end*.

**Comprehensibly.**

*Comprehensibly* means *conceivably, intelligibly*. *Comprehensively* means *widely inclusive*.

**Compulsion.**

*Compulsion* denotes physical necessity; *obligation* denotes moral necessity.

**Conceive of.**

See *Of*.

**Conclude.**

*Conclude* means, among other things, *to infer, to arrive at a judgment by a process of reason*. *Decide* means *to come to a resolution* by whatever process.

**Condign.**

The original meaning, now obsolete, of *condign* was *equal in worth or dignity to*. Now the word is used only of punishment; in using it we should remember that it does not necessarily mean *severe* but merely *commensurate with the offense*.

**Condone.**

*Condone* properly means *forgive*, not *compensate for or atone for*.

**Confess.**

*Confess* should be used of faults and sins. *Admit* should be used of mistakes and acknowledgments of truth.

**Confide in.**

To *confide in* a person is to repose confidence in him; to *confide to* a person is to intrust him with a secret.

**Congratulate.**

Almost the only sense of *congratulate* which is not now obsolete is *felicitate*. It differs, however, in meaning from *felicitate* in that it involves more sympathy (feeling with). One may *felicitate* another upon a joy which one does not profess to share. *Congratulate* now takes the direct object without *with*.

**Connection.**

The phrase *in this connection* was condemned by various writers and critics while it was comparatively new, but may now be accepted without reservation. *Connection* in this sense means *contextual relation of thought, speech, or writing*.

**Conquer.**

The distinction between *conquer* and *vanquish* or *overcome* rests on the original meaning of *conquer*, which is to *acquire by effort or by force of arms*. *Vanquish* and *overcome* mean merely to *get the better of* without suggestion of acquisition.

**Consequence.**

This word is legitimately used to mean *importance*, or *moment*. The meaning is of course a derived one from the primary meaning, *something which follows as a result or effect*. A person of *importance* or an event of *moment* is one followed by results or effects.

**Consider.**

The use of *consider* for *think*, *suppose*, or *regard* is comparatively modern and obviously a weakening of the primary meaning of the word, which is *to contemplate attentively* ("consider the lilies . . ."). The weaker use of the word is now general among good writers.

**Considerable.**

*Considerable* as applied to material things meaning *a good deal* is an American colloquialism. As an

adverb it is obsolete except as used in dialect, as, "I was considerable tired."

### Constantly.

*Constantly* should be distinguished from *frequently*. It means *continually, incessantly*. *Frequently* means *at intervals, often*.

### Consummate.

A marriage is not *consummated* when the ceremony is performed, but afterward:

"When youth and beauty met together,  
Kindle their image like a star  
In a sea of glassy weather."

As a verb it means *complete, make perfect*, and is pronounced *consummate*. As an adjective it is pronounced *consummate*, and means *complete, perfect*.

### Contagious.

*Contagious* means "communicable or infectious by contact." *Infectious* is applied, not only to diseases which are communicable by contact, but to all diseases which arise from *infection*, that is, the entrance into the animal or human body of micro-organisms. *Transmissible* is sometimes used to include both classes of diseases.

### Contemptible.

*Contemptible* means *to be despised or held in contempt*. *Contemptuous* means *disdainful*. If you say to your opponent, "My opinion of you is con-

temptible," you say something to which he is quite likely to agree.

### Contents noted.

This is a piece of commercial slang which a good writer will avoid even in business letters.

### Continual.

*Continual* is applied to actions that are repeated without cessation—that is, that begin and end at intervals, the action being intermittent, but not the repetition. *Continuous* applies to actions that continue without intervals. When a noise is *continual*, it is the repetition and not the sound that is *continuous*.

### Contractions.

See *Ain't*.

### Contrary.

*Contrary* is distinguished by careful speakers from *opposite*, *converse*, and *reverse*. *Contrary* things cannot exist in the highest degree of either in the same object at the same time: "Thus folly and wisdom are *contrary*, for the profession of either precludes the other; yet most human acts and statements partake of both" (*Standard Dictionary*).

*Opposite* applies primarily to position *over against*, real or figurative. *Opposite* things may supplement and complete each other.

*Converse* applies to an exchange of position between two or more parts, as, "God is love; love is God."

*Reverse* applies to a change which makes a thing the opposite or contrary of what it was.

### Contrast.

*Contrast* is followed generally by *with* rather than *to*. In passive constructions *by* is sometimes used: "The dark foliage was brilliantly contrasted by the glittering whiteness of the plain". (J. F. Cooper). This is an awkward construction which might be easily avoided.

### Convene.

*Convene* means primarily *come together*; *convoke* means *call together*. Secondarily, *convene* means *convvoke*; its use in this sense is not incorrect, neither is it precise.

### Convenient.

*Convenient* in the sense of *within easy reach*, "handy," belongs in colloquial speech or dialect. In the sense of *conveniently near, near in time or place to*, it is said to belong to Ireland and the United States.

### Conversely.

*Conversely* does not mean *contrariwise*. See the distinction between *contrary* and *converse* under *Contrary*.

### Convince.

This word is no longer synonymous with *convict*. *Convict* means *to prove guilty*. *Convince* means "to

cause (a person) to admit as established to his satisfaction that which is advanced in argument" (*Oxford Dictionary*). One is *convinced* of truth or of sin; one is *convicted* of crime.

### Corporal.

*Corporal* means "of or belonging to the human body." *Corporeal* means *bodily* as opposed to *spiritually*. Hence, "corporal punishment," "corporeal woes."

### Correspond.

*Correspond* is followed by *to* when it means "to be equal to in character or function," as, "This corresponds to what we observe in mankind." It is followed by *with* when it means *agree*, as, "That does not correspond with what he said yesterday."

### Cos.

The abbreviation *Co* forms plural and possessive as do ordinary nouns: plural *Cos.*; possessive singular, *Co's*; for possessive plural *Cos'*. It seldom occurs in any of these forms except the possessive singular.

### Council.

A *council* is a body organized for legislative or deliberative purposes. *Counsel* as a concrete noun means a lawyer in his function as representing a client; as an abstract noun it means advice. "At a meeting of the council assembled to offer counsel to the king, the people were represented by counsel."

**Couple.**

To use *couple* merely in the sense of *two* is to use it loosely and colloquially. Properly it means *two of the same kind that are in some way paired or associated together*.

**Crank.**

This word meaning *a person of eccentric ideas* has passed since 1881 from the category of slang into that of colloquial speech.

**Creditable.**

*Creditable* now means *bringing credit or honor, reputable*. It is obsolete as a synonym of *credible*, which means *believable or worthy of belief*.

**Crime.**

A *crime* is an act punishable by law; *sin* is a transgression of moral law; *vice* is wrongdoing, thought of as harmful to the doer or others.

**Cultured.**

See Introduction, p. iv.

**Cunning.**

*Cunning* does not mean *pretty and amusing, quaintly attractive*. Do not use it unless you mean *knowing, skilful, dexterous, clever, artful, guileful, or sly*.

**Cupful.**

The plural of this word is *cupfuls*. See *Teaspoonful*.

**Custom.**

*Custom* is the voluntary repetition of an act; a *habit* is an act become involuntary through custom. We speak of the *habits* of animals as if all were involuntary, unless we wish to distinguish those which are not. Thus we might say of a dog, "It is his custom to visit the garbage-pail daily."

**Cute.**

*Cute* in the sense of *smart* or *clever* is colloquial; in the sense of *pretty* and *amusing*, "*cunning*," it is an Americanism universally condemned as slang or highly colloquial. See also *Cunning*.

**D****Dare.**

*Dare* is an older form for the present indicative third singular than *dares*. It is not used to-day before the infinitive; we say, "He dare not do it" and "He dares to go anywhere." See *Need*.

*Daresn't* is a contraction for *dares not* allowable colloquially at least in the third person singular of the present indicative. It is obviously incorrect in any other person or number, for if the required form is *dare* the contraction would be *daren't*. Compare *Don't* and *Doesn't*. Similarly *durstn't* is a proper contraction only in the preterit third singular. *Dared not* is also correct for this tense and number.

**Data.**

This is a plural form sometimes incorrectly used as singular. See also *Strata* and *Phenomena*.

**Date.**

The use of this word to mean *an engagement* is still slang, though its highly disreputable origin is now nearly forgotten.

**Dead.**

*Dead* is allowable in the sense of *absolute* or *complete*, as, *a dead certainty*. Even the phrase *dead beat*, meaning *completely tired*, is allowed by the *Oxford Dictionary*, though marked colloquial by the *Standard Dictionary*.

**Deal.**

*Deal* as a noun meaning *a business transaction* is vulgar or slang. In the sense of *an underhand transaction in commerce or politics* it is an Americanism still colloquial.

As a verb, *deal* is followed by *with* (not *on*): "The book deals with the subject of economics."

**Dear.**

*Dear Sir* is less formal than *My dear Sir* in the salutation of a letter.

**Deceased.**

*Deceased* is now accepted by the lexicographers as meaning, among other things, *the person lately dead*.

**Decided.**

The primary meaning of *decided* is *settled, certain, definite*. *Decisive* means primarily *conclusive, determinative*. Both have the secondary meaning, *resolute, unhesitating*.

**Deck.**

*Deck* meaning a *pack* of cards was in good use in England before and during the seventeenth century, at which time the first settlers brought it to America. It fell into disuse, or into disreputable use, in England, but remains in good use in the United States. It is one of a number of seventeenth-century survivals in American speech, which we owe, doubtless, to the care with which the colonists preserved in their isolation the speech of the England they had left.

**Deduction.**

A technical meaning of *deduction* is “inference by reasoning from generals to particulars. In this it is the opposite of *induction* in which the reasoning is from particulars to generals.”

**Definite.**

*Definite* means *having fixed limits, clearly defined*; *definitive* means *decisive, conclusive, final*.

**Delicious.**

*Delicious* is properly applied to that which gives pleasure to the senses. That which gives æsthetic pleasure should be characterized as *delightful*.

**Delighted.**

*Delighted* is used with *at, in, with, by* in various shades of meaning. *Delighted with* usually denotes pleasure in material things, as, “I am delighted with my new car.” *Delighted at* denotes similar pleasure

or satisfaction in other classes of things, as, "I was delighted at the way in which he was received." *Delighted in* is usually applied to the one who performs an act, as, "He delighted in relieving distress." *Delighted by* seems to call attention more distinctly to the cause of the pleasure and possibly to suggest a higher kind or degree of pleasure, as, "The eye was delighted by the beauty of the landscape."

"Deliver the goods."

See "Guiding Principles," p. 9.

### Delusion.

*Delusion* is to be distinguished from *illusion* in that it is a deception of the mind involving a false belief or opinion, whereas an *illusion* is a deception of the senses. A mirage is an *illusion*; belief in witchcraft is a *delusion*, as generally held.

### Demean.

*Demean* originally meant *conduct*. The only meaning of the original verb, not now obsolete, is *to conduct oneself, to behave*. *Demean* in the sense of *debase* probably arose from a misconception of the original meaning as supposedly derived from the adjective *mean*. In the sentence, "It is a thousand times fitter that I should wash thine (feet) nor can I bear to see thee demean thyself thus," *demean* might mean either *conduct oneself* or *debase*. The modern tendency is strongly against the use of *demean* in any other sense than *behave* or *conduct oneself*.

**Demoralized.**

*Demoralized* should not be used to mean merely frightened. In the sense in which it is confused with *frighten* it means, "To lower or destroy the power of bearing up against dangers, fatigue, or difficulty; applied especially to an army or a people under arms" (*Oxford Dictionary*). This is a secondary meaning from the primary one *to deprive of moral principles* (discipline).

**Demure.**

In modern usage *demure* denotes a gravity or sobriety of conduct which is affected or assumed. Originally the word carried no suggestion of affectation. The nun in Milton's line, "Sober, steadfast and demure," was in no sense insincere.

**Departure.**

*To take one's departure* is said to be a confusion of the two constructions *to take one's leave* and *to make one's departure*. It is safe to say the construction is well established now as an idiom.

**Depositary and Depository.**

The second meaning of each of these words is identical with the first meaning of the other. They are commonly distinguished to-day, however, as follows: a *depositary* is *a person with whom funds are left in trust*; a *depository* is *a place where things are left for safe keeping*.

**Depot.**

A *depot* is properly *a place where goods are deposited*

*and stored.* It is correctly used of a railroad freight station, and was long colloquially used (and variously mispronounced) in the United States to mean *a passenger station*. It is not now in good use in that sense.

### Deprecate.

*Deprecate* means *to plead earnestly against*, *to express earnest disapproval of*. *Depreciate* means *to lower in value*, *to lessen the value of*, *to lower in estimation*, *to underrate*. In no senses are the words interchangeable or even similar in meaning.

### Description.

*Description* is unnecessarily used for *kind*, *sort*, *appearance*, as, "chairs of this description." One of the meanings of *description* is, "A group of attributes or characteristics present in or constituting a class" (*Standard Dictionary*), hence the class itself, then *kind*, *sort*. The principle of simplicity would indicate the avoidance of *description* where it means nothing more than *sort*.

### Desire.

*Desire* has many meanings in common with *want*, *wish*, and *need*, but there are some distinctions. We may *desire* anything from a loaf of bread to a starry crown, but we should not use the word in calling for the bread in a shop, not because it would be incorrect, but because it would sound affected,—possibly because it is a Latin word. Perhaps for this reason it is used in lofty diction to apply to higher things; but it also has a special sense of fleshly long-

ing. *Wish* carries some suggestion of the remoteness of the object, but is used with the infinitive to express desire for obtainable conditions or performable acts ("I wish to go"), where in speaking of objects we should use *want*. That which we *want* we think of primarily as lacking; it may also be necessary, or may be both. That which we *need* is both necessary and lacking. See also *Choose*.

### Despatch.

*Despatch* is a variant spelling of the original *dispatch*. There is no difference in meaning.

### Despite.

*Despite* means *in spite of*. We may say either, *despite his opposition* or *in spite of his opposition*, but not *in despite of his opposition*.

### Detect.

*Detect* means *to discover something difficult to discover*, usually by minute traces or differences; also *to discover something wrongfully concealed and difficult to find out*. A flaw or a crime may be either *discovered* or *detected*. Balboa did not *detect* the Pacific Ocean by any minute traces; he *discovered* it. *Detect* should not be used for *see* or *recognize*. "The Southern delegates could be detected by their broad, soft hats"; such recognition does not call for the astuteness of a detective. See *Discern* and *Discover*.

### Didn't use to.

See *Use*.

### Die.

The use of prepositions after *die* is thus defined by the *Oxford Dictionary*: “To die *of* a malady, hunger, old age, or the like; *by* violence, the sword, his own hand; *from* a wound, inattention, etc.; *through* neglect; *on* or *upon* the cross, the scaffold, *at* the stake, *in* battle; *for* a cause, object, reason, or purpose, *for* the sake of one.”

### Differ.

*With* and *from* may be used almost indiscriminately after *differ*. *From* is most often used when the nature of the difference is specified, as, “I differ from him in politics.” Where *differ* carries a suggestion of a quarrel and oral expression of the difference, it is commonly followed by *with*, as, “I am sure to differ with him whenever I see him.”

### Different.

The construction *different than* has been used by the best English writers since about the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is universally frowned on by American authorities, though it has wide colloquial usage. *Different to* is a British construction seldom heard in the United States.

### Direct.

The verb *direct* is correctly used in the sense of *to address, write the address on the outside of a letter*.

*Direct* is correctly used as an adverb meaning *directly*, as, “This train goes direct to Albany.” *Direct* could not be used in such a sentence as, “He

is directly responsible," or in any sentence in which *directly* means *without the intervention of a medium or agent*.

### Directly.

*Directly* means *immediately* in both senses: 1. *without medium or intervening agent*, as, "He is immediately responsible"; 2. *immediately in time, straight-way*, as, "He came directly." In the sense of *as soon as*, both *immediately* and *directly* are colloquial, as, "I ordered my dinner immediately (directly) I came in."

### Disappoint.

In all ordinary meanings *disappointment* is a disagreeable process to him who undergoes it; *disappoint* is defined by such words as, *balk, foil, thwart, undo, defeat, frustrate*. The phrase *agreeably disappointed* is often condemned. It should be noted, however, that the force of the phrase was originally paradoxical. With a certain suggestion of humor, it has become so widely current that we may accept it as useful within its limits.

One is *disappointed of* a hope or wish not fulfilled, an object not attained; if the object when attained proves not to be what we wished or hoped we are *disappointed in* (rarely *with*) it.

### Discern.

*Discern, discriminate, and distinguish* may be used as practically synonymous. All three mean *to set apart*; *discern*, on the basis of what one sees; *dis-*

*criminate*, on the basis of judgment; and *distinguish*, on the basis of *distinctive* marks. Thus we speak of one who is *distinguished* in appearance, *discriminating* in his judgment, and *discerning* in his insight. See also *Discover* and *Detect*.

### Discommode.

*Discommode* means the same as *incommode* or *inconvenience*. It has been gradually falling into disuse and has already been called obsolete.

### Discover.

*Discover* means *uncover*, *reveal*, *find*, and implies the previous existence, known or unknown, of the thing found. *Invent* means *devise*. To speak of an *invention* as a *discovery* is careless use or figurative use, or else it implies an identification of the invention with the principle thereof. See also *Detect* and *Discern*.

### Disinterested.

*Disinterested* in the sense of *uninterested* is now obsolete. The word now means *unbiased by personal interest*; *free from self-seeking*.

### Dislike.

*Dislike* should be used to express disagreeableness and minor degrees of aversion; *hate* should be used to express intense aversion, and should be sparingly used as applied to inanimate things. We may have *dislike* for the odor of garlic and *hatred* for vice or crime.

**Disposition.**

The modern tendency is to use *disposal* rather than *disposition* to mean *power of disposing of, control*, in such expressions as "*at one's disposal*."

**Disremember.**

*Disremember* meaning *to fail to remember* is a dialect form. English writers put the word in the mouths of American characters in fiction.

**Distant.**

See *Remote*.

**Distinctive.**

*Distinctive* means *characteristic, distinguishing*. It should not be confused with *distinct*, which means *distinguishable*. One's manner of speech might be *distinct* without being *distinctive*; *distinguishable* without being *characteristic* or *distinguishing*.

**Divers and Diverse.**

*Divers* means *various, sundry, several*; *diverse* means *not alike in nature or qualities*. Thus, "*There were divers men of diverse opinions*," means that there were several men no two of whom held the same opinion.

**Donate.**

This word seems to be a comparatively recent American coinage. In the sense of *to bestow a considerable gift on an important or worthy cause* it is perhaps allowable, though but little used outside of

the United States. In the ordinary sense of *give* it is vulgar. Only one expression could be worse: "The Mt. Doma property has been *gifted* to the college."

### Don't.

*Don't* is a contraction of *do not*, and cannot be correctly used for *does not*. For the third person singular *doesn't* is the only allowable contraction.

*Don't hardly* is universally condemned. See *Can't hardly*.

### Dope.

*Dope* as a noun means "Any thick liquid or pasty preparation, as of opium" (*Webster*). As a verb, it means *to treat* (something or some one) *with such material, to drug*. In these meanings it is recognized by dictionaries; in various figurative and derivative meanings it is slang.

### Do so.

These words are sometimes used in infinitive constructions at the end of a sentence, as, "We can stop now to help you if you are willing to have us do so." This use is sometimes condemned, as is also the clipped construction of such a sentence as "I should like to have you go if you are willing to." Both constructions may be accepted as idiomatic, the second being slightly more colloquial than the first.

### Dote on.

See *Like*.

Double negative.

See *Can't hardly*, *Don't hardly*, and *Isn't but one*.

Double possessive.

See *Of*.

Doubt.

The verb *doubt* is followed by a clause introduced by *whether* or *if* when two alternatives are in consideration, as, "I doubt whether that is the best way to go about it." *If* is also used in this construction, though perhaps not quite logically. A clause introduced by *that* after *doubt* raises the doubt without considering the alternative: "I doubt that a law could be framed to prevent it." Negative clauses after *doubt* are introduced by *that*, as, "I do not doubt that he will come in time." See *But*.

Doubtlessly.

*Doubtlessly* is a form acknowledged by the dictionaries, but seldom used to-day except by unpractised writers. *Doubtless* is adverb as well as adjective; the addition of *-ly* cannot make it any more adverbial.

Dove.

*Dove* is fast becoming obsolete as the past tense of the verb *to dive*. *Dived* is preferable in the preterit, and has long been the required form for the past participle.

Draft and Draught.

*Draft* is the phonetic spelling of *draught*. The American tendency is to use *draft* for all senses of the

word. In the *Oxford Dictionary*, *draft* is given as established for some of the meanings, such as, *the drawing of a body of troops, the body of troops so drawn, the drawing of money by a written order, a money order, a plan or sketch of a drawing or a piece of writing*.

### Drank.

*Drank* is the correct form for the past tense of *drink*; *drunk* is the present participle.

### Dreadful.

See *Awful*.

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### Drive.

The distinction between *drive* and *ride* as it is made in England is that “One drives in a vehicle of which the course is under one’s control, as one’s own or a friend’s private carriage, or a hired carriage or cab; one rides in a vehicle the course of which one does not control, as a public stage-coach, omnibus, or tram-car, or the cart of a friendly farmer who gives one a ‘lift’ on the road.” In the United States we speak of *driving* usually as the process of controlling the vehicle; unless an American holds the reins, the wheel, or the throttle he considers that he is *riding*. Of course we do not *drive* a horse that we bestride, nor an ordinary bicycle, even though we control them.

### Drown.

The preterit of *drown* is *drowned*. *Drownded* is vulgar.

**Due to.**

*Due to* is an adjective phrase; *on account of* is adverbial. The distinction should always be sharply made. We say, “The dissatisfaction of the people was due to the high tax-rate; taxes are high because of (or *on account of*) the necessity for new roads.”

**Dumb.**

*Dumb* means primarily *unable to speak*; secondarily, *reticent*. Since a person “who hasn’t a word to say for himself” easily gets the reputation of being stupid, and since the German word *dumm* does mean stupid, *dumb* has come into local and vulgar use in the United States to mean *stupid*. All authorities condemn its use in this sense.

**Durstn’t.**

See *Dare*.

**E****Each.**

*Each* and *every* and their compounds *each one*, *every one*, and *everybody* should always be followed by singular pronouns and verbs. “Every one must show his (not their) ticket at the door.” “Let each one tell his own story.” “England expects every man to do his duty.”

**Each other.**

Logically *each other* should be used only of two persons; *one another* any number more than two. The distinction is made by careful writers and speakers,

though the modern tendency in speech is to use *each other* in all cases.

### Eat.

In modern usage *eat* is used in present and future tenses, *ate* in the past, and *eaten* is the past participle. "I eat my breakfast at eight o'clock; yesterday I ate my dinner at one; to-morrow I shall eat dinner at half past six." *Eat* pronounced *et* is fast becoming obsolete for the past tense, though it still survives as a variant pronunciation.

### Eaves.

Originally this was not a plural word, but its final *s* has caused it to be taken for one, and it now universally takes the plural verb.

### E'er.

See *Ere*.

### Effect.

See *Affect*.

### Egoist.

The *egoist* is one who makes self-interest the main principle of his conduct. The *egotist* is one who constantly uses the pronoun *I*. Thus the *egoist* is one who thinks always of himself; the *egotist*, one who talks always of himself. *Egotism* might be merely a symptom of *egoism*. In many ordinary senses the words are indistinguishable, and in ordinary conversation the distinction is not often made.

### Either.

The use of *either* to mean *each* or *each of the two*, as, "There was a fireplace at either end of the hall," has often been condemned. Yet it is the first and oldest meaning of the word and has been in good use from the time of King Alfred to that of George V.

The question whether *either I or they* shall be followed by *am* or *are* is one which cannot be answered satisfactorily. The only safe way is to avoid the construction, as, "Either I am wrong or they are." If it cannot be avoided, let the verb agree with the nearest subject, as, "Either you or I am wrong."

### Elder.

This was originally the comparative of *old* and meant the same thing as *older*. It is now, however, restricted to certain special uses, of which the chief is that of an attribute without *than*: "Not now used of things, except with quasi-personification. Now chiefly used with nouns denoting family relationship, or as denoting the senior of two indicated persons" (*Oxford Dictionary*). "An elder brother's care, an elder brother's love were there" (Scott). It is used also to apply to ancient or early times, as, "Huge as the giant race of elder time" (Southey). In all these uses *older* would be entirely correct.

### Elegant.

*Elegant* means *characterized by grace or refinement*. Its use as a general term of approbation ("I had an elegant time") is universally condemned as a piece of slangy hyperbole.

**Eliminate.**

This word means to *put out, thrust out, exclude, expel*. It does not mean *isolate, extract, elicit, or deduce*. The chief objection to it is that it is often misunderstood, and that it is often used where a simpler word would have a more unassuming effect.

**Else.**

*Else* should be followed by *than* with the nominative case, as, "It is no one else than I," meaning, "It was none other than I." *But* and the accusative should not follow *else*; this is a construction by itself: *it is no one but me*.

In compounds *else* may, according to modern usage, take the 's of the possessive. *Anybody's else* is correct, but modern usage prefers *anybody else's*.

**Emerge.**

*Emerge* means *to rise out of a liquid*; it is practically the opposite of *immerge*, which means *to plunge in*.

**Emigrant.**

An *emigrant* is one who goes out of a country; an *immigrant* is one who comes in. The choice between the two words depends on whether the migration is thought of as motion out of or into.

**Eminence.**

*Eminence* is *height*. *An eminence* is a *lofty position*. *Imminence* means *threatening danger*. *Immanence* means *a permanent abiding within*. Thus we might

say, "The imminence (threatening danger) of his situation was due to the eminence of his position." *Eminent* means *high* or *lofty*. *Imminent* means *impending*. *Immanent* means *indwelling*.

#### Enclose.

In words like *enclose*, *endorse*, and *enquire* the choice between *in* and *en* is practically optional with the user. British usage shows a tendency toward *enclose*, *endorse*, and *inquire*, but still holds to *enquire* in the sense of *to ask a question*. American usage shows a tendency to use *in* for all three words, but finds the *en* forms acceptable.

#### Enclosed please find.

This is objectionable, not because *please* is misused, but because the whole is a bit of business slang. "I (or we) enclose" is shorter and better.

#### Encounter.

*Encounter* is now rarely used to denote a casual or friendly meeting; it carries almost inevitably some suggestion of hostility.

#### Endorse.

For *indorse* and *endorse*, see *Enclose*.

*Approve* is a figurative meaning of *endorse*. It is legitimate as a figure of speech, but, like all figures, should be used discriminately. It is a commercial figure, and often carries an implication of self-esteem. A man, for example, who speaks of himself as *endorsing* an idea implies that without his support it might not pass current.

**Endwise.**

American dictionaries give *endwise*, *lengthwise*, *side-wise*, as the preferred form. British usage seems to prefer the forms in *-ways*: *sideways*, *lengthways*, *endways*.

**Enjoy.**

Such expressions as "I enjoyed myself at the party" are sometimes condemned on the logical ground that one enjoys the party and not oneself. "I enjoyed the party" is certainly correct and more precise, but the other is acceptable at least colloquially, and is used by many careful writers. *Enjoy* followed by the infinitive, as, "I should enjoy to go," is obsolete usage.

**Enthuse.**

Practically all dictionaries declare this word to be colloquial or humorous. It seems, however, to be gaining ground in current usage and is becoming more and more widely acceptable, though it has still a certain suggestion of vulgarity.

**Environment.**

*Environment* meant originally merely *surroundings*, *vicinity*, *surrounding district*. Recent usage, however, tends to restrict it to mean *surroundings or surrounding conditions which influence one's life or character*.

**Epidemic.**

An *epidemic* disease is, strictly speaking, one which becomes prevalent in a community or group of

people at a special time, but which is due to causes not generally prevalent in that community. Loosely, it is used to mean merely *prevalent*. *Endemic* is applied to diseases which belong to a particular district and are due to special conditions which exist there.

### Epithet.

An *epithet* is merely “an adjective indicating some quality or attribute which the speaker or writer regards as characteristic of the person or thing described.” It is not necessarily derogatory; whether the epithet is for praise or blame should be indicated by an adjective, as, *complimentary*, *vilifying*, *derogatory*.

### Equally.

*Equally* may be followed by *with*, but not by *as*. In such an expression as, “equally as good,” *as* is redundant because both *as* and *equally* express equality. In sentences expressing comparison, “this is equally as good as that,” *equally* is redundant.

### Er and Or.

These two suffixes, as used to form nouns of agency or doing, cannot be distinguished by invariable rules. In general, *er* is used to form nouns referring to profession or employment, whereas the nouns in *or*, usually formed from Latin past-participle stems, are more apt to mean merely the doer of the act without the notion of trade or profession. The *er* suffix is less apt to be added to nouns that are

The present distinction in usage between *forward* and *forwards* is that the latter expresses a definite direction viewed in contrast with other directions. In some contexts either form may be used without perceptible difference of meaning; the following are examples in which only one of them can now be used: "The ratchet-wheel can move only *forwards*"; "the right side of the paper has the maker's name reading *forwards*"; "if you move at all it must be *forwards*"; "my companion has gone *forward*"; "to bring a matter *forward*"; "from this time *forward*." The usage of earlier periods, and of modern dialects, varies greatly from that of modern standard English. In the United States *forward* is now generally used, to the exclusion of *forwards*, which was stigmatized by Webster (1832) as "a corruption."

#### Four and five.

For the construction "Four and five *is* (or *are*) nine," see *Are*.

#### Fragrance.

*Fragrance* is any sweet or pleasing smell. *Aroma* applies primarily to spice, but is extended to other odors, as those of coffee and cigars. *Bouquet* was a special term for the odor of wine, now extended to other odors.

#### From.

*From* is correctly used to indicate the grounds of a judgment or belief, in the sense of *to judge from*, as, "From the way he spoke, you would have thought he was angry."

*From* is always redundant when used with *whence*, *thence*, and *hence*. *Hence* means *from here*; *thence*

means *from there*; *whence* means *from where*; *from whence* would mean *from from where*.

### Full.

When *full* means *having within its limits all it will hold*, it is obviously incapable of comparison. When it means, as it legitimately may, *containing abundance of*, *fuller* would mean *containing more abundance*, or, *more nearly approaching fullness*. Compare *complete*, *perfect*, and others.

### Function.

*Function* is allowable as meaning *a social meeting of a formal or important kind*. It has, however, been so frequently applied to social gatherings of no importance that it has now very little meaning.

### Funny.

*Funny* is correctly used to mean *comical*, but is colloquial as meaning *odd*, *strange*, without suggestion of *mirth-provoking*.

### Further.

See *Farther*.

### Fuss.

This word has long been in good use in its ordinary meanings, both as noun and as verb. If it seems colloquial it is doubtless because of the inevitable lack of dignity in the things it describes. It has had a certain vogue as slang, meaning *to seek*, or *spend time in, the company of women or girls*.

**Future.**

*Future* is sometimes misused for *subsequent*. “He was ill then, but on a future occasion I saw him seemingly quite restored to health.” The occasion is *future* (and non-existent) at the time denoted by the first verb (*was*), but *subsequent* at the time of writing. The past tense of the second verb (*saw*) makes the word *future* illogical.

For *in future*, see *In*.

**G****Generally.**

See *Commonly*.

**Genius.**

*Genius* has nothing in common with *genus* except an Aryan root and a deceptive similarity of appearance. *Genius* means (most commonly) *unusual natural gift*, usually for creative art; *genus* means a *class, kind, or group*.

**Genteel.**

The *Oxford Dictionary* thus describes the course run by this word:

A few years before the middle of the nineteenth century the word was much ridiculed as being characteristic of those who are possessed with a dread of being taken for “common people,” or who attach exaggerated importance to supposed marks of social superiority. In seriously laudatory use it may now be said to be a vulgarism; in educated language it has always a sarcastic or at least playful coloring.

It is interesting to note that it comes from a French word, *gentil*, which has several times been taken over into English. *Gentle* came first (in the thirteenth century), then *gentile*, *jaunty*, and *genteel*.

### Get.

*Get* has a wide variety of meanings and uses (some seventy have been classified), many of which are idiomatic, colloquial, and slangy. Of these, only a few need comment here.

*Got* is not always redundant with *have*. “I have just got a dollar” ought to mean “I have just now acquired a dollar”; “I have just a dollar” means “I have a dollar; no more nor less.” When it denotes possession rather than acquisition, “I have got brains enough to understand that,” it is no worse than colloquial; the best of us say it in familiar speech, but omit the *got* in anything more formal. In many cases *have got* represents a combination of the ideas of possession and acquisition, as, “You have got my handkerchief,” “I have got a cold.” As denoting compulsion, “I have got to go,” it is a shade worse; in this sense it is set down as “colloquial or vulgar.”

*Gotten* has more than once been condemned as obsolete, but still drags on a lingering existence, nursed by pedantic school-teachers.

In such expressions as *get home*, *get to the city*, *get* means a little more than merely *arrive*; there is a sense of achievement in it; *succeed in coming or going to* defines it more nearly in this use, and as it is used in such phrases as *get across*, *get over*, and many

others. This is a very old idiom. In other idioms such as *get along*, *get away*, *get thee behind me*, *get* seems more nearly equivalent to *go*, as it does in such an expression as *get over the road*.

*Get* means *become* in various acceptable constructions, as, "They soon got to be friends," "The two privates soon got to be officers." This is old usage which sounds colloquial to-day. "The evil soon gets to be forgotten," is not a modern turn of speech. *Get* in the sense of *find opportunity* may be an extension of this use; it is now colloquial or even vulgar in such expressions as "I couldn't get to do it," "get to go." *Get* with the infinitive is accepted in familiar speech in such phrases as "You get to like it after a while," "They got to talking."

*Get through* in the sense of *finish* is often condemned; it is, however, well-established idiom. It is not illogical if considered as an extension or figurative use of a phrase in which *get* means *succeed in going*, as, "We could not get through the under-brush." *To be through* in the sense of *to have finished* is not so well established; it is set down as colloquial.

*Get together* in the sense of *assemble* is very old. It took on the added meaning of *fraternize* in slang recently, but is fast losing its suggestion of slang because it is not humorous. Its duration will probably be determined by its utility. On *get by*, see "Guiding Principles," p. 9. Most of the other new coinages with *get* are still pure slang and need no further comment.

**Give.**

See *Donate*.

**Give away.**

*Give away* in the sense of *betray* seems to be coming into good use. Dictionaries condemn it as slang in the sense of *an unconscious self-betrayal*, but call it colloquial in other senses of *betray*, as to *betray a joke*.

**Go.**

*Go* has a great number of meanings and uses which are in the debatable lands of diction. The use of *going* as an auxiliary meaning *about to*, as in "I was just going to say," has often been challenged. It has been an English idiom for four hundred years; the worst that can be said of it is that it is less formal than *about to*.

We are told that such an expression as "I will go a dollar on it" must be avoided in refined society, probably because of its suggestion of the poker phrase, "See you and go you one better." *Go better* is a technical phrase of various card games, and when applied to other matters is figurative, but not necessarily slangy, nor any more vulgar than the game from which the metaphor is drawn. One legitimate meaning of *go* is to *carry one's action to a specified point of progress or completeness*, as in "if you go to that," "go to the bottom," and the like. When the specified point is an offer or concession in some transaction, we have such a sentence as this of Macaulay's, "Lewis consented to go as high as twenty-five thousand crowns," which need not be

avoided in any class of society. When the transaction is in a game of cards, we have such expressions as this from Goldsmith, "Men that would go forty guineas on a game of cribbage." If this is not vulgar, it is perhaps because cribbage is more respectable than poker. The expression *go a dollar on* is not vulgar unless it is vulgarly used.

A meaning of *go* applied to money is *pass current*: "Bank-notes, she supposes, will go everywhere." This meaning, perhaps, applies figuratively in *that won't go*, used of a statement that is not acceptable at its face value. *That won't go down* is used in the same sense; and we note that *go down* has long been idiomatic for *to be swallowed*, just as *swallow* has been metaphorically used to mean *accept as truth*.

*To go back on*, meaning *to prove disloyal to, to betray*, is a colloquialism of American origin.

*Go for* in the sense of *aim at securing*, Robert Louis Stevenson speaks of (in the *Apology for Idlers*) as an "emphatic Americanism." It is interesting to note that it is listed as a legitimate phrase that has been in use since the middle of the sixteenth century. In the sense of *assail* or *attack*, it is colloquial.

### Good.

*To the good* denoting a balance on the right side of the ledger, as, "Ten dollars to the good," is a legitimate phrase. *All to the good* as an adjective phrase of general approbation is slang.

*For good* and *for good and all* meaning *finally* are idiomatic and have long been in good use.

*To be any good, no good, some good* ("It's no good

talking," "This isn't strong enough to be any good") may pass current in familiar speech, but have no place in diction that aspires to dignity.

*Good deal* may safely be accepted as good usage, though it is still set down as colloquial by some dictionaries.

*Good* and *well* lead to some confusion because *good* is an adjective and *well* is both adjective and adverb; moreover, many of the verbs with which they are often used are of the class sometimes called "inactive" (such as *look*, *seem*, *appear*, *feel*, *taste*, *smell*, and some others) which usually take the adjective rather than the adverb, as, "This tastes good." Thus we might have almost any combination, either adjective or adverb, with any of these verbs, in some conceivable meaning; the words are misused when they might convey the wrong meaning. If we wish to say, "You appear to be in good health," we say, "You look well." "You look good" ought to mean "You appear to be virtuous." In "You look well" *well* is an adjective; if it were an adverb, the meaning would be, "You perform well the act of looking." "This doesn't go good," is incorrect, because *go* is not one of the verbs that are used with the adjective. "I feel good" and "I feel well" are both correct because *good* and *well* are both adjectives; *well* is better in this case because it means *in good health*, and that is what the expression most often means.

**Good use.**

See "Guiding Principles," pp. 3-10.

**Got and Gotten.**

See *Get*.

**Graduate.**

*Graduate* is correctly used to mean either *to admit to an academic degree* or *to take a degree*. Thus one who takes the degree may be said *to be graduated* or *to graduate*. The modern tendency is to use the active form. Those who object to the active form say that "the student does not graduate himself." They do not, however, hesitate to say that he *takes* the degree. The word also applies to the finishing of a course of study which does not lead to a degree.

**Graft.**

*Graft* as noun and verb denoting illicit gain is still set down as colloquial by such dictionaries as recognize it. There is little doubt, however, that it is coming into good use; it is often used now without apology by careful writers in dignified context.

**Grand.**

This is another of our general-utility words for persons of limited vocabulary. See also *Fine*, *Nice*, *Elegant*, *Awful*.

**Great.**

In such phrases as *great big*, *great* is a colloquial adverb of emphasis. It is so also in a *great, thick book* when the idea is a *very thick book*. It is correct if it means a *large book that is thick* in contradistinction to a *small thick book*.

**Groom.**

American dictionaries allow *groom* in the sense of *bridegroom*. It is not commonly used except in the phrase *bride and groom*. English dictionaries call it rare.

**Grouch.**

This appears as a modern slang or dialect formation, but it seems to have an honorable history. An old word, *grutch* (both noun and verb), dropped out of use, leaving the adjective *grouchy* as its representative, at least in New England. *Grouch* seems to come from the adjective, a modern noun to correspond with the old *grutch* now obsolete. It has already gained wide acceptance, and bids fair to hold its place.<sup>1</sup>

**Grow.**

*Become* is a legitimate meaning of *grow*, and has been so from the earliest use of the word, as in “growing old,” “times grew worse,” and the like.

**Guess.**

*Guess* is properly used to mean *conjecture*. The colloquial use of it, so often called an Americanism and severely condemned, is like *conjecture* in that it involves some uncertainty; the difference is that it expresses nothing but the uncertainty, and is equivalent to *perhaps* (“I guess I’d better be going”), whereas in the sense of *conjecture* it means *to form an approximate judgment without data*. Another colloquial American use of the word is to

<sup>1</sup> For the material of this note on *Grouch* I am indebted to Prof. G. L. Kittredge.

express complete certainty by quasi-humorous understatement, "I guess you'll be warm enough now." These two American uses of *guess* are neither vulgar nor provincial; merely colloquial.

"I guess it is going to rain," indicates that the speaker has not sufficient grounds on which to base judgment. "I suppose it is going to rain" indicates that the speaker has some grounds for the judgment. "I think it is going to rain" ought to mean that the speaker has thought about the matter, but is still in doubt. When he has no doubt he might say, "I believe it is going to rain."

## H

**Habit.**

See *Custom*.

**Had better, Had rather, Had have, etc.**

See *Have*.

**Half.**

*In half* and *in (or into) halves* are equally correct in such sentences as, "Cut the loaf in half." With *halves*, *two* is always redundant. Other idiomatic phrases are *half and half*, *by halves*, *to go halves*, and the like.

*Half-baked* in the sense of *immature*, *unfinished*, *crude*, especially as applied to things and ideas, is an acceptable figure of speech. As applied to persons, and meaning *silly*, *half-witted*, it is slang or dialect.

**Hand.**

*Workman* is an old idiomatic meaning of *hand*, especially at sea, as *all hands*. As applied to other

matters, *all hands* is colloquial, as, "After the game, all hands went swimming." See also *Underhand*, *Second hand*.

**Handful.**

See *Cupful*.

**Handy.**

The commoner meanings of *handy* are, *ready to hand*, *near at hand*, *conveniently accessible*, *ready for use*, *convenient to handle*, and, of a person, *dexterous*. *Convenient* also means *suitable for use* or for special uses, but is colloquial in the sense of *ready to hand*, or of *expedient*. Thus it is *convenient* to have a screw-driver always *handy*. See also *Convenient*.

**Hang.**

This word has a devious and complicated history, of which we need note no more than that at one time it was a weak verb (see Glossary, Part III), and from the fact that it was so conjugated in early versions of the Bible, and in the phrase of the law courts, "Hanged by the neck until he be dead," *hanged* is now the accepted form for the preterit and past participle when the word means *to put to death by hanging*. Doubtless the imprecation "I'll be hanged" helped also to fix the form; here the form is determined, in part at least, by its value as a compromise oath.

**Happen.**

*Transpire* is not a synonym for *happen*. *Happen* means *occur*; *transpire* means *become known*. An

accident, for example, might not *transpire* until long after it *happened*. *Happen* strictly applies to occurrences in which there is a manifest element of chance; a wedding, for example, usually *takes place* rather than *happens*. In ordinary speech, however, *happen* seems to have lost much of its significance of chance.

*Happen in* for *make a casual call* is set down as an Americanism by English dictionaries, and as colloquial by American dictionaries. *Happen in with* for *meet*, or *happen to meet*, is not in good use.

### Hardly.

See *Can't hardly*.

*Hardly* is not to be distinguished from *scarcely* in meaning and use. *Hardly* originally meant *with difficulty*; *scarcely* must at first have meant something like *rarely*; now both mean *barely*, *only just*, *almost not*. Their position in the sentence is like that of *only*, just before the word they limit, unless there can be no ambiguity in another position. “I hardly think I can help you” means “I think only with difficulty.” “I think I can hardly help you” means “I think I can help you only with difficulty.” “I can't help you at all hardly” is at best highly colloquial, meaning, “I can help you not at all, or at best very little.”

### Hasten.

There is practically no distinction made now between *hasten* and *hurry*,—unless it be that *hasten* has almost disappeared from our spoken language

and become a literary word. *Hurry* originally carried an idea of agitation and confusion which did not belong to *hasten*, but to-day it would not be a misuse of the word to say, "He turned, and coolly hurried toward the woods, keeping his eye warily on his pursuer."

**Hate.**

See *Dislike*.

**Have.**

*Had better* and similar constructions are thus explained by Professors Kittredge and Greenough in *Words and Their Ways in English Speech*:

A peculiar idiom with the preterit subjunctive *had* survives in a few phrases. Thus, "I *had as lief* go as stay," "You *had better* not do this," "We *had rather* ride than walk." In this particular use *had* is really the preterit subjunctive of *have* in the sense of "regard." The meaning may be clearly seen in the first example, *I had as lief*, "I should regard it as as pleasant to go as to stay." The extension of the same construction to *had rather* is due to analogy. Naturally *I had*, *we had*, etc., were contracted to *I'd*, *we'd*, etc., in these phrases (as elsewhere), and many persons suppose that *I had* in the expressions just quoted is a mistaken expansion of *I'd* (the contraction of *I would*). Such a notion is not strange, since this use of *had* is confined to so small a number of phrases. The result has been a determined attempt to stigmatize the idiom as an error, and to substitute *I would rather*, *I would better*, etc., for it. The idiom, however, is perfectly established, has been in use for centuries, and has been habitually employed by the best writers. In some cases

the substitution of *I would* results in downright error. Thus, "I would better go" is positively ungrammatical.

In older English the indicative *have* and *hath* are common in such phrases, as well as the subjunctive *had*. Thus:

"Yet *have* I levere maken him good chere  
In honour than myn emes (*i. e.*, uncle's) lyf to lese."  
—Chaucer, "Troilus," ii, 471-2.

The meaning "hold," "regard" (cf. Lat. *habere*), is also seen in such phrases as "I pray thee have me excused," *i. e.*, not "procure an excuse for me," but "hold me excused in your own mind," "pardon me."

In the case of idioms like "I had better," one frequently hears the objection that *had* "will not parse." As a matter of fact, it *will* parse easily enough, if one knows how to parse it. But the objection would have no validity even if the phrases were grammatically inexplicable. The grammarian has no business to object to an established idiom, for idioms are superior to paradigms and analytical diagrams. Grammar was made pretty imperfectly from language, not language from grammar.

*Have seen* rather than *saw* (the perfect rather than the preterit tense) is called for in such sentences as "That is the tallest man I have ever seen." This is because the verb must logically refer to all past time up to the present (perfect tense) and not to a single point of past time (preterit).

For a discussion of *have* with *got*, see *Got*.

The vulgar "If I had have known," and similar constructions, perhaps arise from a telescoping of the two expressions, "If I had known" and "I ought to have known." The confusion is complete when the

*have* is written as it is often pronounced, *of*: “If I had of known.” This construction is one of the hall-marks of illiteracy.

*Haven't only* is a double negative, a construction condemned as illogical in modern English. “I have only one pencil” is the correct form. This is, of course, a different construction from that in the sentence, “I have not only met him, but dined with him.” Here, by the way, *have not* are not contracted in speech because the *not* is emphatic.

*Have to* is idiomatic to denote obligation. See explanation of the construction under *Is*.

**He was given.**

See *Was*.

**Healthful.**

The modern tendency is to use *healthful* to mean *wholesome*, *health-giving*, and *healthy* to mean having good *health*.

**Heap.**

From Anglo-Saxon times down to the time of Shakespeare one of the accepted meanings of *heap* was *a great company*, *a multitude*. Later, some time in the seventeenth century, it came to mean simply *a large number* or *a great deal*, in which sense it is in colloquial use to-day.

**Hear.**

*Hear* has always been properly used in the sense of *listen to with compliance or consent*, as in “hear our

prayer." *Hear to*, however, in the sense of *consent* or *consent to* ("he wouldn't hear to it") is colloquial.

### Help.

In such expressions as "I cannot help it," *help* means *remedy*, *prevent*, *cause to be otherwise*. In "I won't do it any more than I can't help," *help* means *avoid*, *refrain from*, *forbear*. In this sense the auxiliary should be negative in form (*cannot*), since the meaning is "I will do so no more than I can *not* avoid doing."

*Help* meaning *servant* or *servants* is said by British dictionaries to be local or provincial usage. At all events it is justly condemned.

For *cannot help but*, see *But*.

### Hence.

See *From hence*.

### Herself.

For use of pronouns in *-self*, see *Myself*.

### Her going.

See *Me*.

### Hike.

This word came into slang, meaning *to tramp* or *a long tramp*, about the time of the Spanish-American War. It has since passed into colloquial use, and is now used in newspapers and periodicals without the apology of quotation marks. It is not safe to prophesy that it will get farther.

Him.

For comment on *him and me*, see *But*.

On *him* for *his* in such sentences as "I don't mind his doing it," see *Me*.

*Him and himself*, see *Myself*.

His.

For the use of *his* after the indefinite pronoun, see *One* and *Any one*.

Hit.

*Hit* is legitimately used to mean *a fortunate chance*, as, "a lucky hit," and *a successful stroke made in performance or action of any kind*. In such meanings it has often been unjustly condemned as slang. To the modern American it sounds like a metaphor from baseball, but it is much older than the game. It was at one time set down as a bit of theatrical slang; the fact is that it is not slang in itself, and is an obvious figure of speech that might arise from any one of a large number of sports or occupations. It may be awkwardly or slangily used, but is not to be condemned in itself.

Hold up.

*Hold up* meaning *to stop by force and rob* is in fairly good use in the United States. The more recent slang phrase *stick up* is said to be of Australian origin.

Home.

*Home* as an adverb, as in "I am going home," was "originally the accusative case of the noun *home* in

its primary sense as the case of destination after a verb of motion" (*Oxford Dictionary*). Thus it is idiomatically used to mean *to home*, but not to mean *at home*, as "She is home."

*Home* should be distinguished from *house*; the house is the building; the home is the building together with the associations, particularly those of family life.

#### Hon.

*Honorable* is an adjective, not a title. It should always, except, perhaps, in addressing an envelope, be preceded by *the* and followed by *Mr.* or the name, as, *The Honorable Mr. Smith*, or, *The Honorable Thomas J. Smith*. To call a man *Hon. Smith* is no more idiomatic than to call him *clever Smith* (or *clev. Smith*), or to use any other adjective without the article. See also *Rev.*

Names of ordinary occupations, even though they be political, should be distinguished from titles. To say that Town Clerk Jones met Architect Brown and Grocer Robinson on the street, and that the three went to the office of Monkey-wrench Manufacturer Smith, gives us a titled democracy little short of fantastic.

#### Hopes.

The plural form is grammatically correct and has long been in use in the phrase *in hopes* ("I was in hopes to see you") and in other places where the singular would also be correct, as in the following sentence from Macaulay: "Great hopes were enter-

tained at Whitehall that Cornish would appear to have been concerned: but these hopes were disappointed."

### Horrid.

See *Awful*.

### How.

"In United States colloquial speech 'How?' is used in asking for the repetition of something not quite understood" (*Oxford Dictionary*). This use is universally condemned by American authorities.

As an adverb in interrogative and other uses, *how* means primarily *in what manner*. It is, however, idiomatically used with weakened meaning (little idea of *way* or *manner*) as hardly more than equivalent to *that* in introducing clauses after verbs of saying and the like.

"They told her how upon Saint Agnes' Eve  
Young virgins might see visions of delight."

*As how* in this sense belongs only in dialect.

### However.

*However* is colloquial when used interrogatively to mean *how in any circumstances or way whatever*, as, "However could you do it?" It is correctly used to mean *in whatever manner*, by whatever *means* (not interrogative), as, "However it was done, it was finished at last."

### Humanitarian.

*Humanitarian* is now universally used to mean

*humane, philanthropic*, and is rarely used in any other sense. In its primary meaning it appears only rarely, as a technical word.

Hung.

See *Hang*.

Husky.

In the sense of *strong, powerful*, this word is recognized by recent American dictionaries as in colloquial use in the United States. It is probably the same word as *husky*, a corruption of *Eskimo*, applied to Eskimo dogs, whose most conspicuous trait is endurance.

Hypocritical.

*Hypocritical* means *assuming a false appearance of virtue*. *Hypercritical* means *over, unduly, unnecessarily critical*. The two should not be confused.

## I

I.

Such sentences as "She gave it to you and I," "It isn't for he or I to deny it," are as grossly incorrect as "Him and me went." "She gave it to you and me," is correct for the same reason that "She gave it to me," is correct; the pronoun should be in the objective case as object of the preposition *to*.

For a discussion of such constructions as "No one was at home but I," see *But*. For cases of other pronouns in various constructions, see the various pronouns, *He, She, Her, We, They*, etc.

For *I mistake not*, see *Mistaken*.

For *I don't know as I do*, see *As*.

In such a sentence as “*I don't know but (or but that) I might*,” meaning “*Perhaps I might*,” *but* has its negative force,—“*I do not know that I might not*.” See *But*.

*I guess I will* is a colloquial expression for *I think I shall*. *Will* expresses determination or promise; *guess* expresses uncertainty; the two are incompatible. See *Guess* and *Shall*.

For the use of the subjunctive in such sentences as *I wish I were*, see *Were*.

*It is me* has now so many ardent advocates that we may make our choice between saying, “*It is I*,” and being called pedantic by one party, or saying, “*It is me*,” and being called ungrammatical by the other. Most of us prefer to avoid the construction.

### Idea.

*Idea*, we are told, must be distinguished from *opinion*; but the distinction is not easy to make. *Idea* had originally nearly the meaning we now attach to *ideal*, and still signifies *mental image, vision*. In so far as it suggests the ideal, it suggests also a certain remoteness from fact which runs through its extended or looser uses. Thus it means “*a notion or thought more or less imperfect, indefinite, or fanciful; a vague belief, opinion, or estimate; a supposition, impression, fancy*” (*Oxford Dictionary*). Accordingly, even such a sentence as “*I have an idea that it is going to rain*” does not necessarily mean merely “*It is my opinion that it will rain*,” but

may mean "It is my more or less fanciful and vague opinion, etc." To express a more definite opinion, we should say *I think* or *I believe*. (See *Guess*.) In "What is your idea of so and so?" (Mrs. Todgers's idea of a wooden leg, for example) it may mean *mental image*. In the exclamations, "What an idea!" "Why, the idea!" the speaker implies that the notion is fanciful, does not correspond with the facts. It is not safe to assume that *idea* is misused wherever *opinion* could be substituted.

**Idiom.**

See "Guiding Principles," p. 3.

**If.**

See *Whether*.

**Ilk.**

*Ilk* is erroneously used to mean *family*, *class*, *set*. It is an old word, as an adjective meaning *same* and as pronoun meaning *each*, surviving now in Scottish dialect. Its misuse arises from its appearance in Scottish territorial titles and designations, as, "Keith of that *ilk*," meaning *of the same*—*i. e.*, "Keith of Keith" as distinguished from Keith of Ravelstone or of some other estate. In such designations it has been misunderstood, and we get such anomalies as "Squeezles was one of the immemorial *ilk* of the minstrel people."

**III.**

*Ill* and *sick* may be used almost interchangeably. The difference is that *ill* is used idiomatically as a

predicate adjective, as, "The child is ill," but not as a mere attributive, as, "That is an ill child,"—as an attributive *ill* means evil, as, "Ill tongues shall wound me." *Sick* has become more or less restricted in England—and so to some extent in the United States—to the meaning of *nauseated*, but the restriction cannot be maintained when we need an attributive adjective. *Unwell* has also received through a euphemism a special meaning which has nearly put it out of general use.

**Illusion.**

See *Delusion*.

**I'm not.**

See *Ain't*.

**Immediately.**

See *Directly*.

**Immerge.**

See *Emerge*.

**Immigrant.**

See *Emigrant*.

**Imminence.**

See *Eminence*.

**Immunity.**

*Immunity* means *exemption from service, duty, liability*; in general, *freedom from usual liabilities or from things evil or injurious* (as disease). *Impunity*

means *freedom from penalty or punishment*. Thus, "You cannot commit murder with impunity," means, "You cannot commit murder and expect immunity from punishment."

### Imperative.

*Imperative* is distinguished from *imperious* in that it is not applied to persons, whereas *imperious* is applied to both persons and things, mainly to commands. *Imperative* most often means *urgent, demanding obedience*; *imperious* commonly means *commanding, having a commanding aspect or demeanor*.

### Implicate.

*Implicate* and *involve* are as nearly synonymous as English words ever are; to say that "*involve* is used in the affairs of life that are only troublesome, *implicate* in those that are criminal," is to disregard the facts. In the sense of *comprise* ("This question involves the other") *involve* is the commoner word, but *implicate* is correct. In the sense of *to include in a charge, to cause to be concerned in wrong-doing*, *implicate* is perhaps more often used to-day, but *involved* has always been used with this meaning.

### Implicit.

A secondary (ecclesiastical) meaning of *implicit* is, *not independently arrived at by the individual* (but *involved* in the general faith of the church,—*involved* is the primary meaning of *implicit*), hence *unquestioning*, hence *absolute*. The word cannot be used indiscriminately in all senses of *absolute*, but is cor-

rectly used only in harmony with the ecclesiastical sense. Thus it is applied to *belief*, *confidence*, *obedience*, *submission*, and the like, but not to *ignorance*.

**Impunity.**

See *Immunity*.

**Impute.**

The Latin *imputare*, from which we get *impute*, means *to bring into the reckoning*. Thus *impute* is usually used of matters involving blame or fault. It is, however, correctly but not commonly used to mean merely *ascribe*, to assign without suggestion of blame; this use seems to arise from a special theological significance of the word illustrated in "Christ's righteousness was imputed to man."

**In.**

The primary distinction between *in* and *into* is that *into* is used after verbs of motion, *in* after other verbs. In Anglo-Saxon, however, *in* with the accusative meant *into*, and still has that meaning in certain constructions, particularly as a preposition with an object after such verbs as *cast*, *fall*, *lay*, *put*, *throw*, *thrust*, *divide*, *split*, *break*; as, "Throw it *in* the fire," "Break it *in* three pieces," and various idiomatic phrases. Adverbial *in* is used after verbs of motion, *come*, *go*, *walk*, etc., a fact which may have helped to make the use of the preposition idiomatic.

*Into* should not be used for *in to* where the *in* belongs with the verb and the *to* with the succeeding words, as, "I waded *in* to where I had seen it sink."

*In* is often used in England where Americans use *on*. We speak of traveling *on* the boat, the train, the car; of meeting a friend, transacting business, owning a house, *on* the street; and the like. One is as logical as the other; we may think of the house, for example, as fronting *on* the street, or as standing *within* an area which we think of as the street. Certainly *on* is in good use in these senses in the United States. For the distinction between *at* and *in* in such phrases, see *At*.

*In future* and *in the future* are both in good use, and equally correct. *In future* is doubtless elliptical for *in future time*, in which *future* is an adjective, and *the* is unnecessary. In the other phrase, *future* is a noun. The fact that we have no such phrase as *in past* has nothing to do with the matter.

The expression *in our midst* has held its place in the face of a storm of criticism for more than a hundred years, and may safely be accepted now without further cavil. It was long condemned as an innovation, the older phrase being *in the midst of*.

*In spite of* means exactly the same as *notwithstanding*, except that it is perhaps a little more forcible. It is entirely acceptable in this sense.

*In town* is acceptable after verbs of motion (see discussion of *in* and *into* above). The two words constitute an adverbial phrase analogous to *up town*, *down town*, indicating direction.

*In*, we are told, is superfluous in the phrase *in so far*. If so, it is too late to make a change; *in* was so completely a part of the phrase in the sixteenth century that the words were printed as one, *insofar*.

*In time* usually means *a little early, with a margin to spare*. *On time* means *exactly at the appointed time, neither early nor late*. It is used most often of trains, or other means of conveyance, but cannot be condemned as railroad slang. It is in essence what Francisco says to Bernardo (in "Hamlet"), "You come most carefully upon your hour."

*In it*, and *not in it*, had some vogue as slang a few years ago, but they have been long in use to mean *in the running*, and *not a competitor*.

*In for it* meaning *committed to a course and certain to meet with punishment or something disagreeable* has been in use for at least two centuries. It is always familiar, or mildly colloquial.

Participial clauses introduced by *in* are often loosely used: "In reading this book I did not get a very clear idea of what it is about." If the clause means anything, it means "As I read," or "At the time I was reading." "In describing these scenes, his description is very vivid." Here the clause should be omitted, or else the sentence should read "His description of these scenes is very vivid." See similar clauses under *By*.

**Inasmuch.**

No distinction appears in meaning between *inasmuch* and *insomuch*. In construction, *inasmuch* is followed by *as*; *insomuch* by either *as* or *that*.

**Inaugurate.**

*Inaugurate* as applied to a course of action is defined by Dr. Johnson as "to begin with good omens."

It applies to something of importance begun with a significant act or formal ceremony. To use it as meaning nothing more than *begin* is empty pomposity of diction.

**Incite.**

See *Excite*.

**Inclose.**

See *Enclose*.

**Index.**

The plural may be either *indexes* or *indices*. There seems to be some tendency to use *indices* when the word means *a token or indication*, and *indexes* when it means *an alphabetical list of subjects or names*.

**Indict.**

*Indict* means *to bring a charge against, accuse*. *Indite* means *write or compose*. Thus we *indict* a person, but *indite* a poem or a letter.

**Individual.**

*Individual* properly means, as most commonly used, *a single human being as opposed to Society, or to some group, as family or church*. As meaning simply *a person* it is colloquial, vulgar, or humorous, as:

Now I hold it is not proper for a scientific gent  
To say another is an ass, at least to all intent;  
Nor should the individual who happens to be meant  
Reply by heaving rocks at him, to any great extent.

—Bret Harte, "The Society upon the Stanislaus,"

Indorse.

See *Endorse*.

Induction.

See *Deduction*.

Infectious.

See *Contagious*.

Informed.

*Informed*, usually qualified by *well* or *ill*, means *instructed*, *educated*, *intelligent*. *Posted* means *supplied with full information*; it is narrower in meaning than *informed*; to be supplied with information is not necessarily to be intelligent. It is a commercial figure, from the posting of a ledger.

Ingenious.

*Ingenious* usually means *resourceful* or *clever in invention and construction*. *Ingenuous* most commonly means *frank*, *candid*. Good usage of to-day demands that the two be kept apart.

Innumerable number.

This phrase is so obviously tautological that it needs no discussion.

Inquire.

See *Enclose*.

Intend.

*Intend* and *mean* in their chief current senses are interchangeable. In such a sentence as "What do

you intend by these words?" most speakers would use *mean*, but *intend* is correct.

**Invent.**

See *Discover*.

**Involve.**

See *Implicate*.

**Irritate.**

See *Aggravate*.

**Irruption.**

See *Eruption*.

**Is.**

For "Twice one *is* two," see *Are*. See also other constructions under *Be*.

The controversy which raged loud and long over the use of the participle in such constructions as *is being built*, has now died down and ceased. The construction has resisted all assaults, and is now firmly fixed in the language.

*Is come* is an idiomatic expression seldom heard to-day unless it be understood in such contractions as "Your car's come, sir." In it, *come* is perhaps felt as an adjective, as if it were "Your car is here," or else as a transitive verb that might have a passive conjugated with *to be*, like *strike* (passive *is struck*). *Be* was formerly used to form perfect tenses with intransitive verbs, but it has been, as the *Oxford Dictionary* tells us, "Now largely displaced by *have* after the manner of transitive

verbs: *be* being retained only with *come*, *go*, *rise*, *set*, *fall*, *arrive*, *depart*, *grow*, and the like, when we express the condition or state now attained rather than the action of reaching it, as 'the sun is set,' 'our guests are gone,' 'Babylon is fallen,' 'the children are all grown up.'" *Is come*, moreover, might signify *has this moment come*, whereas *has come* might indicate arrival at any time up to the present. This difference in tense is the main distinction between *is received* and *has been received* as they are used in acknowledging letters. For other passive constructions, see *Was*.

*Is* and other forms of *to be* are correctly used with the infinitive in such constructions as "It was to be," "The cause is far to seek," indicating necessity, obligation, or duty. *Have* is now more common in such constructions,—"I have to do it."

*Isn't hardly*, *isn't scarcely*, are double negatives. See *Can't hardly*, *Hardly*, *Scarcely*.

*Isn't but one* is probably elliptical for "There isn't (any number or quantity) but one." Whether ungrammatical or illogical, it may be accepted as idiomatic in familiar speech. More formally we should say *there is but one*, or, *there is only one*.

#### Issue.

*Take issue* and *join issue* mean in ordinary use to engage (*join*) in controversy. *Join issue* should never be used to mean to come to an agreement.

#### It is I.

See *I*.

Its.

*Its* is the possessive form of the pronoun *it*. *It's* is the contraction of *it is*.

## J

“Jar you.”

See p. 6.

Jell.

This verb is a humorous or vulgar back-formation from the noun *jelly*. It has no standing except as a joke; when the sculptor *sculps* and the burglar *burgles*, we may allow the jelly to *jell*.

“Jump on.”

See p. 6.

Jr.

*Junior* is not a title, like *Esquire*, but part of the name to which it is appended. As a part of the name it is used with either *Mr.* or *Esq.* (but not with both. See *Esq.* and *Mr.*). To address a letter to *John Jones, Jr.*, is no more courteous than to address it to *John Jones*.

## K

Kick.

For *kick*, meaning *object*, see “Guiding Principles,” p. 9. The *Oxford Dictionary* gives “to show temper, annoyance, defiance, dislike, etc.; to rebel, be recalcitrant. *To kick against* or *at*, to object strongly to, rebel against, reject with anger or

scorn; to spurn," with examples going back to the fourteenth century.

Kid.

*Kid* meaning *child* was a piece of low slang in the seventeenth century. It has lately passed into colloquial and familiar diction.

Kind.

*Kind of* as adjective and adverb, *kind of a*, and *these kind*, are widely current in colloquial speech, but are in general to be avoided in formal diction. Phrases like *all kinds of birds*, *this kind of bird*, are legitimate. In *this kind of a man* the *a* is at best redundant. But when *kind o'* becomes a meaningless adjective or adverb ("I was kind o' hangin' round") indicating that the speaker is not sure of anything enough to say it positively, it is merely a bad habit. For *those kind*, *these kind*, see *That*.

Know as.

See *As*.

## L

Lady.

In its chief current use, *lady*, the *Oxford Dictionary* tells us, "is applied to all women above a loosely defined and variable, but usually not very elevated, standard of social position." In just so far as the word is insisted on by women of inferior social position, it is avoided by those whose social position is assured.

**Last.**

*Last two*, *last three*, and the like are now the established phrases for *two last*, etc. See *First*.

*Last* is accepted as meaning *latest*, especially in current phrases such as the *last number* of a periodical, though no one is accused of over-scrupulousness who says *the latest number*. *Last* means *most lately* in such expressions as "When did you see him last?"

In speaking of one of two objects, a careful speaker uses *latter* rather than *last*; in speaking of more than two, he uses *last*. In general, this distinction is not considered a necessary one.

**Laundry.**

*Laundry* is a noun, not a verb. The verb is *launder*, of which the past participle is *laundered*.

**Lay.**

See *Lie*.

**Learn.**

*Learn* in the sense of teach was good English down to or through the eighteenth century, but is now vulgar.

**Leave.**

*Leave* is acceptable in the sense of *go away from*, with the name of the place left, as *leave Boston*, *leave the house*. In absolute construction, without the name of the place, as, "We leave at ten o'clock," it is set down as colloquial.

*Leave* is incorrectly used for *let* in such expressions

as "Leave me be." "Leave me alone" is correct if it means "Go away and leave me to myself."

*Leave* should not be confused with *lief*. See *Lief*.

### Lend.

The difference between *lend* and *loan* is that *lend* as a verb and *loan* as a noun are universally in good use; *loan* as a verb, applied chiefly to money, was in good use universally in the seventeenth century, but fell into disuse in England during the eighteenth century, and remains in the United States as one of many seventeenth-century survivals. It is allowable in America as applied to money matters and more or less formal transactions in other commodities, but condemned as colloquial or worse in other uses.

### Lengthwise.

See *Endwise*.

### Lengthy.

*Lengthy* is a word of colonial American origin. It usually means *long* with an added implication of *tedious prolixity*, and is commonly applied to sermons, discussions, and the like. In this sense it is a sufficiently useful word, but when it is applied merely to physical length, as a *lengthy rope*, it falls into the class of superfluous formations like the nouns *attractiveness* for *attraction*, *distinctiveness* for *distinction*, *preparedness* for *preparation*, etc.

### Less.

*Less* is now regarded as incorrectly used when applied to measures of number. See *Fewer*.

*Lesser*, really a double comparative, applies more or less technically to one of two objects or persons in contradistinction to greater, as, the *Lesser Bear* (a constellation), *Ajax the Lesser*. *Least* applies similarly to one of a larger group, as, the *Least Fly-catcher*.

### Let.

*Let's* is a contraction for *let us*. Thus, the vulgarisms *let's us*, *let's you and I* will not bear analysis.

*Let alone* is colloquial or familiar meaning *not to mention*, as, "I couldn't even find a useful man, let alone an honest one."

*Let up* and *let up on* meaning *stop* are slangy or colloquial Americanisms. *Let-up* as a noun is perhaps in somewhat better standing.

### Liable.

See *Apt.*

### Libel.

Strictly, *libel* is written or printed defamation; *slander* is oral or spoken. In ordinary speech the distinction is not made.

### Lie.

The distinction between *lie* and *lay* is that *lay* is the causative verb from *lie*, means *to cause to lie*, and so is necessarily transitive,—not even a hen can *lay* without laying *something*. When *lay* means *to cause oneself to lie*, the reflexive pronoun is the object, as, "Now I *lay* me (myself) down to sleep." The principal parts of *lie* are *lie*, *lay*, *lain*; of *lay*, they are *lay*, *laid*, *laid*. Note that the form *laid* does not

occur in the verb *lie*. Thus when the fairy “laid a spell on the lake,” she did not, as the New England child supposed, lie down for a short period of repose on its surface.

#### Lief.

*Lief* as an adjective means *pleasant* or *agreeable*; as an adverb it means *gladly*, *willingly*. *I had as lief* and *I would as lief* are both idiomatic; for explanation and discussion of them see *Had rather*.

#### Life.

*Life* is often used in a collective or generalized sense, as, “The loss of life was enormous.” This is what it usually means in such a sentence as “They lived in misery all their life.” “All their lives” would be correct if the speaker were thinking of individual lives, not of the collective stock of life.

#### Lift.

*Lift* in the sense of *steal* is called obsolete by American dictionaries, and in the sense of *steal cattle*, colloquial. This is not a modern slang meaning of *lift*, *to elevate*, but a much older word, the Gothic *hlifan* (earlier than Anglo-Saxon). It is to give the archaic tone rather than that of modern slang that Kipling uses it in the line, “And he has lifted the Colonel’s mare, which is the Colonel’s pride.” It survives in good use in the word *shoplifter*.

#### Light.

*Lighted* and *lit* may be used indiscriminately as past tense and past participle of the verb *to light*.

*Lighted* is usually used as attributive adjective, as, a *lighted match*, *lighted torches*, etc., but even in this use *lit* is not incorrect,—witness Browning's phrase “the unlit lamp.”

### Like.

The commonest abuse of *like* is its misuse as a conjunction to introduce a clause containing a finite verb, as, “They make brushes like they make the brooms.” In such sentences the clause (“they make brooms”) should be introduced by *as*. This use of *like* as a conjunction, the *Oxford Dictionary* tells us, is “now generally condemned as vulgar or slovenly, though examples may be found in many recent writers of standing.” A recent German student of American idiom (Dr. A. D. Schooch, in *The Little Yankee*) tells us that we commonly say “It looks like it might rain.” If we do, our speech is slovenly according to our own standards.

*Like* is often an adverb with something of the force of a preposition, as in such sentences as, “You act like a fool,” “Don't talk like that,” “I worked like a beaver.” Its prepositional forces may be seen from the fact that it takes an object in the objective case: “She looks like him,” “That's just like her!” See also *As*.

As a verb, the use of *like* with a direct object and infinitive, as, “Should you like me to play the minuet?” is not condemned. *Like to* in such expressions as “he had like to have fallen,” or, “liked to have fallen,” meaning *almost fell*, was once in good use, but is now heard only in vulgar speech or dialect.

As an adjective, *like* should be used rather than *love* when it means *be pleased with* or *find pleasure in*, as, "I like strawberries," and instead of such expressions as, "I adore lobster," "I dote on chocolate ice-cream."

Likely.

See *Apt.*

Limited.

*Limited* properly means *restricted*. As applied to circumstances, it means *narrow*. When a merchant advertises "a few of these choice sets for sale at a limited price," he does not mean to imply that usually there is no limit to the price, but merely that the price is low,—and he would do much better to say so.

Line.

The *Oxford Dictionary* places side by side two interesting examples of the use of this word in a sense sometimes condemned. One is from a letter of Dr. Johnson's to Mrs. Thrale, 20 September, 1773: "Seeing things in this light, I consider every letter as something in the line of duty." The other is from Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791): "Johnson was . . . prompt to repress colloquial barbarisms . . . such as *line* for *department*, or *branch*, as the civil line, the banking line." The word has been in fairly good use in this sense since the early seventeenth century. It has perhaps suffered somewhat of late from having become more or less technical in certain commercial uses, as "a line of goods," "What's your line?"

*Lines* meaning the *reins of a harness* is an Americanism.

*Along these lines* and its variants is a metaphor so worn and faded from use and abuse that it may well be discharged from further service.

Lit.

See *Light*.

Live at.

See *At* and *On*.

LL.D.

In this abbreviation, meaning *Doctor of Laws*, and *LL.B.*, *Bachelor of Laws*, note that the two *L*'s are not abbreviations of two words, but indicate a plural, as *pp.* for *pages*, *ff.* for *pages following*. There should be no period after the first *L*.

Loan.

See *Lend*.

Locate.

This word seems much more at home in American than in British vocabularies. It was used very early in the history of the colonies, seemingly in the sense now set down by American dictionaries as colloquial, *to establish oneself in a place, to settle*. It is said to be "chiefly U. S." in the senses (1) *to establish the limits or position of*, and (2) *to fix or establish in a place*, as, "I shall try to locate him in the country, and, "The store was located opposite the church." It is universally allowed in the sense of

*discover the exact place of*, as, “locate the enemy’s battery,” but has not found its way into the dictionaries in the ordinary sense of *find*, as, “I could not locate my fountain-pen.”

### Look.

For *look*, *seem*, and similar verbs with adjectives, see *Good*.

### Lot.

*A lot* or *lots* meaning *a great deal* is universally called colloquial.

### Loud.

Both *loud* and *loudly* are correctly used as adverbs. We have, for example, Shakespeare’s “The rites of war speak loudly for him,” and Campbell’s:

Where the battle rages loud and long,  
And the stormy winds do blow.

### Love.

See *Like*.

### Lovely.

*Lovely* as a vague term of approbation is colloquial, and meaningless as it applies to all things, from an ice-cream soda to the Grand Cañon of the Colorado. If the speaker has but one word for these two, clearly it is the right word for neither. See *Fascinating*, *Nice*, *Awful*, and others.

### Low-priced.

See *Cheap*.

**Lunch.**

As a noun, *lunch* is now the usual word rather than *luncheon*. *Luncheon* seems to have been the earlier word, and many still prefer it for formal use. As a verb meaning *to take lunch*, *lunch* is the only form.

**Lurid.**

*Lurid* does not mean *bright*, but “giving a ghastly or dull red light as of flames seen through smoke” (*Standard Dictionary*). In a figurative sense as applied to fiction it means *sensational*.

**Luxuriant.**

*Luxuriant* means *producing abundantly, growing profusely*. *Luxurious* means *characterized by luxury*.

# M

**Mad.**

*Mad* meant originally *insane, beside oneself, out of one's mind*. The meaning has been more or less restricted at times to madness produced by one or another specific cause, as drink, folly, enthusiasm, desire, and to-day most frequently, anger. In the ordinary sense of *angry* it is condemned with varying degrees of severity from “dialect” to “colloquial.” Shakespeare's use of the word has been cited from the “Merchant of Venice”:

Now, in faith, Gratiano,  
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief;  
An 'twere to me, I would be mad at it.

Here *mad* need not necessarily mean merely *angry*; more probably *beside myself* (with anger or vexation), as it must be in "Julius Cæsar," "It would inflame me, it would make me mad." We have it also in Acts xxvi:11, "And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Here it probably meant *furious* to the translator.

#### Madam.

*Dear Madam* is the proper salutation of a formal letter to a woman, whether she be married or unmarried. The form for the plural is *mesdames*. The French form of the singular, *madame*, is also acceptable in English, but the other is much more commonly used.

#### Mail.

*Mail* is acceptable in the United States in the sense of *post* both as noun and as verb.

#### Majority.

In its common meaning, *majority* means *a number which is more than half the whole number*; *plurality* means *excess over some other number*, usually the next largest. *Majority* takes a plural verb when the speaker indicates the individuals composing it, as, "The majority of those present were Republicans." It is singular as an abstract noun, as, "His majority was very large."

#### Make.

*Make* has various special meanings which give rise to more or less colloquial phrases. It means

*acquire by effort*, as in “make money”; *arrive at*, as of a ship “making” land or harbor; *go*, as in “He made for the door.” As applied to trains (“I think I can make the 10.20”) it seems to mean *arrive at* perhaps with an added sense of *acquire by effort*. The sense is doubtless the same in the less concrete and equally colloquial *make it* (“I tried my best, but I couldn’t make it”). Something of both *arrival* and *acquisition* may be seen in the phrases common in college circles *make Phi Beta Kappa*, *make the football team*. *Make* is now in as good use as *pay* (in the United States at least) in the phrases *make a visit* and *make a call*. *Make good*, meaning *to succeed* (“Do you think he can make good?”), is slangy.

**Manly and Mannish.**

See *Childlike*.

**Marry.**

It has been said that no one can *marry* except one who is empowered to perform the ceremony; other mortals *are married*. The facts show, however, that the active form has been used of both man and woman, bride and bridegroom, for some five hundred years.

**Mathematics.**

*Mathematics* almost always takes a singular verb, as do the names of the other sciences, *mechanics*, *physics*, etc. An exception is *the higher mathematics*, which is construed as a plural.

**May.**

See *Can*. *Might* is the form for the past tense, indicative and subjunctive, of *may*.

**Me.**

The possessive case of the pronoun (*my, his*), not the objective (*me, him*), is demanded in such sentences as "I hope you don't mind *my* doing it." The object of the verb is not the pronoun, but the clause *my doing it*. See also *I*.

**Mean.**

*Mean*, as an adjective, is correctly used in the sense of *ignoble, contemptible*, and so may be defended in the common expression, "I never felt so mean in my life." It is indefensible in the sense of *in poor health* ("Feeling awful mean"). In the sense of *disobliging, offensive in small ways*, it is colloquial. It is in good use in a variety of senses—*stingy, penurious, small-minded, of low estate or rank*, etc.

**Means.**

*Means* may take either a plural or a singular verb; most commonly it takes the singular. Adjective and verb used with it must agree; we may say either, "All means have been exhausted," or, "Every means has been exhausted."

**Measles.**

*Measles* was originally a genuine plural form, but it is now almost universally construed as a singular noun.

### Mechanics.

This word is plural in form only. It is the name of a single science, and takes a singular verb, as do *mathematics*, *physics*, and the like.

### Merely.

*Merely* and *simply* are often interchangeable. *Merely* primarily means *purely*, *without admixture*; *simply* means *without complication*. In many more or less figurative uses either figure will serve. In some uses, however, *merely* means *no more than*, *only* ("It was merely the cat"). *Simply* may mean *no less than*, as, "It was simply stupendous."

### Messrs.

This is an abbreviation of the French form *Messieurs*, used to supply the want of an English plural of *Mr.* It should no more be used in the salutation of a letter to mean *Dear Sirs* than *Mr.* should be used to mean *Dear Sir*. *Messrs.* is itself an abbreviation, and should not be abbreviated further.

### Metaphors.

In common words; see p. 12.

### Mettle.

A comment on *metal* and *mettle* will be found under *Brethren*.

### Middle.

See *Center*.

**Middling.**

*Middling* as adjective and noun is in good use in various senses, but is condemned as colloquial, even as vulgar as an adverb meaning *fairly*, *tolerably*.

**Midst.**

See *In our midst*.

**Mighty.**

*Mighty* was formerly in good use as an adjective meaning *very great* ("a mighty noise"), and as an adverb meaning *greatly*, *very* ("I know mighty well"). It is now colloquial or familiar in both uses.

**Mind.**

*Mind* is incorrectly used for *remember* in such ways as, "Do you mind how he ran when he saw us?" It is correctly used to mean something like *bear in mind* in such expressions as *never mind* and *mind the step*. It is correctly used to mean *give heed to*, thence, doubtless through such expressions as "Mind what I tell you," it comes (especially in America) to mean *obey*.

**Minus.**

The use of *minus* to mean *deprived of* or *without*, as, "He came back minus his hat," is colloquial.

**Minute.**

See *Moment*.

**Mistake.**

The passive form of the verb, as, "If I am not mistaken," for "If I mistake not," has been condemned

as useless and illogical, but it has withstood the attack, and is now more widely used than the active.

### Moment.

In ordinary speech *moment* and *minute* are interchangeable as meaning *a small, indefinite period of time*. *Moment* was originally a mediæval measure of time; there were 1,080 moments in an hour. Thus *moment* came to mean *a period of time too small to be measured, a negligible interval*.

### Monetary.

See *Financial*.

### Moneyed.

A sound objection to this word is the fact that we already have in the language a simpler one meaning the same thing, *rich* or *wealthy*. It is not a sound objection to say, “If we tolerate *moneyed* and *landed*, why not *fielded* farmers and *cowed* dairymen, or even *brained* scholars and *ironed* mine-owners?” Because we do not need these words; when we do we shall have them. They are properly formed from nouns with *-ed* meaning *provided with*. See further comment under *Talented*, and in Introduction, p. iv.

### Moot.

As a noun *moot* originally meant *assembly*. Next it became a technical law term meaning *an assembly of students at which hypothetical cases were discussed*. Thus a *moot* question was a question for discussion at a *moot* or *assembly*. From this arises its use as an adjective meaning *for discussion, debatable, doubtful*.

*Moot* is the correct form in this sense; *mooted*, if it meant anything in such an expression, would mean *argued* or, possibly, *brought forward for discussion*.

### More.

A careful speaker will use *more* in speaking of two objects or persons, *most* of more than two, as, "This is the more expensive of the two," "He is the most considerate man I know."

### Mornings.

See *Evenings*.

### Most.

*Most* for *almost* is obsolete except as it is found in dialect. *Most all* for *almost all* is widely used colloquially, but is out of place in formal speech or writing.

*Most perfect*, *most complete*, *most thorough*, and similar superlatives are, strictly speaking, illogical, as if a thing is perfect it cannot be more so. *Most perfect*, however, is commonly used colloquially to mean *most nearly approaching perfection*.

### Mr.

*Mr.* as a general rule is used as a title when no other is used. It is not commonly used with a man's full name. It should never be used when *Esquire* follows the name, and is not usual when abbreviated titles such as *D.D.*, *LL.D.*, and the like follow the name. Its use before other titles is obsolete except as it has survived in a few special phrases such as *Mr. Justice Smith*, *Mr. Chairman*, *Mr. Mayor*, etc.

## Mrs.

*Mrs.* should never be used with the title of a woman's husband, as *Mrs. Colonel Smith*, *Mrs. Doctor Jones*.

## Mutual.

*Mutual* means *reciprocal*. Thus two *mutual* friends would be friends each of whom felt friendship toward the other. One who is a friend to each of two others is to them a *common* friend.

## My.

For the use of *my* with the present participle (*my going*), see *Me*.

For *My dear Sir*, see *Dear*.

## Myself.

The use of *myself* for *me* is archaic, as, "There he found John, Peter, and myself." It has never been in good use for *I*, as in the sentence, "There were three there, John, Peter, and myself."

## N

## Name.

*Name* is sometimes incorrectly used for *mention*, as, "He never named such a proposal to me." It is sometimes made to serve for *say*, as, "I never named a thing about it to any one." This is very loose, careless usage. It is correct, of course, meaning *to mention a person by name*. *To name after* or *for* is said to be now an Americanism; certainly, it is in good use in the United States.

National use.

See "Guiding Principles," pp. 4-6.

Near.

*Near* in the sense of *stingy* or *penurious* is not condemned by either British or American dictionaries.

Near-by.

*Near-by* as an adjective ("A near-by field") is said to be chiefly restricted to the United States. It is in thoroughly good use.

Née.

*Née* does not mean *formerly*. It is the feminine form of the French past participle *né*, meaning *born*. It indicates the name of the family into which a woman was born, but never the name of a former husband.

Need.

For the use of *need* and *needs* in conditional clauses, see *Dare*. *Needs* in the phrase *must needs* is an adverb meaning *of necessity*.

Never.

In such expressions as "Be he never so wise," *never* is the old idiomatic word. But *ever*, since it seemed more logical, came into use also. Now either may be used. See *So*.

*Never* is incorrectly used for *not ever* in such a sentence as "I never remember seeing him," in which the meaning is "I do not remember ever having seen him."

## New.

*New* is obviously redundant in the phrase *a new beginner*.

We may say either *a new pair of gloves* or *a pair of new gloves*, because both the pair and the gloves are new. We do not say *a salt pail of water* when it is the water and not the pail that is salt. If we say *a hot cup of coffee*, it is because *cup* is in the phrase a measure of quantity, not a piece of china.

## News.

This is now a singular noun, uniformly taking the singular verb; though it was once a genuine plural.

## Nice.

A comment on this word made a hundred years ago by Jane Austen is as sound to-day as when it was written:

“But now, really, do not you think *Udolpho* the nicest book in the world?” “The nicest; by which I suppose you mean the neatest. That must depend upon the binding.” . . . “I am sure,” cried Catherine, “I did not mean to say anything wrong; but it is a nice book, and why should not I call it so?” “Very true,” said Henry, “and this is a very nice day; and we are taking a very nice walk; and you are two very nice young ladies. Oh! it is a nice word, indeed! it does for everything. Originally, perhaps, it was applied only to express neatness, propriety, delicacy, or refinement; people were nice in dress, in their sentiments, or their choice. But now every commendation on every subject is comprised in that one word.” “While, in fact,” cried his sister, “it ought only to be applied to you, without any commendation at all. You are more nice than wise.”

It should be noted that the *Oxford Dictionary* gives as a legitimate meaning of *nice*, *kind*, *considerate*, or *pleasant*, whereas American dictionaries call this use of the word colloquial.

**Nicely.**

The *Oxford Dictionary* gives as one meaning of *nicely*, *very well*, *satisfactorily*, and quotes as an example of its use in this sense a sentence in which the word is returned as reply to the question, "How do you do?" This use of the word is universally set down as colloquial in the United States. It is interesting to note that the quotation in the *Oxford Dictionary* is from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

**Nobody else's.**

See *Anybody else's*.

**Nobody else than.**

See *Else*.

**No business.**

The phrase *no business*, as in "He had no business to come," is in good colloquial use. Note its use in the quotation from Professors Greenough and Kittredge under *Have*.

**No doubt but that.**

See *But*.

**No good.**

*No good* in the sense of *worthless*, *of no account*, is colloquial. See *Good*.

No other.

*No other* and *none other* are both probably elliptical phrases, the first for *no other person*, the second for *none other than*. They are both in good use.

No use.

*Of* is necessary in such sentences as "It is of no use for me to try." The *of* is not necessary when the sentence takes the form, "There is no use in my trying."

None.

*None* may properly be either singular or plural. The modern tendency, however, is to use *none* for the plural and *no one* for the singular.

Nor.

*Nor* is required as a correlative after *neither*. After other negatives such as *no* or *not*, *nor* is used to indicate an alternative to the first member, as, "He has neither pen nor pencil." *Or* is used after a negative to express an extension or amplification, as, "There is no food or drink in the house," "There are no books or magazine articles on the subject."

Not . . . all.

See *All*.

Not in it.

See *In*.

Not only . . . but also.

In parallel constructions these correlatives should be so placed as to limit the words they are intended to

modify. Thus, "He not only saw Peter, but Mary also," is incorrect because *not only* limits the verb *saw*, whereas *but also* limits the noun *Mary*. Similarly, "He saw not only Peter, but spoke with him," is incorrect because *not only* modifies *Peter*, whereas *and but* modifies *spoke*. The sentences should read, "He saw not only Peter, but Mary also," "He not only saw Peter, but spoke with him."

Not with so and as.

See *As*.

Noted.

*Noted* should be distinguished from *notorious*. *Noted* means *distinguished, celebrated, famous*. *Notorious* formerly meant the same, but is now applied only to evil fame.

Nothing like.

*Nothing like* for *not nearly* is very old usage, and is to-day no worse than mildly colloquial.

See *Nowhere near*.

Novice.

See *Amateur*.

Nowadays.

*Nowadays* has recently been questioned as a combination which is not according to the spirit of the language. It has been in use, however, since the fourteenth century, and is thoroughly well established as an idiom.

Nowhere near.

*Nowhere near* in the sense of *not nearly* has often been condemned. It is given as a legitimate phrase, however, in the *Oxford Dictionary*, and in the form *nowhere nigh* seems to have been in good use for some five hundred years. See also *Nothing like*

Nowheres.

*Nowheres for nowhere* is vulgar. See *Everywhere*.

## O

O.

The distinction between *O* and *Oh* is that *O* is used in direct address, as, “*O John*,” “*O heart, how fares it with thee now?*” It is always used with a name or a noun, never standing alone. *Oh* is an exclamation expressing any kind of emotion. It may stand alone or at the beginning of a sentence or longer exclamation. In such a sentence as “*Oh sleep it is a gentle thing*,” *oh* is clearly the required form, since the sentence is not a direct address to sleep, as appears from the use of the pronoun *it*.

Obnoxious.

*Obnoxious* is properly used in the sense of *offensive*, *objectionable*, *odious*. It may be used absolutely—that is, without stating to what or to whom the person or thing is obnoxious. It is erroneously used to mean *noxious*—that is, *hurtful* or *injurious*.

Observe.

*Observe* in one of its senses is hardly to be distinguished from *say*. It is defined in this sense as

*to say by way of remark, to remark or mention in speech or writing.* It differs, then, from *say* in that an *observation* expresses something noticed, observed, or remarked.

### Observation.

For *observation* in the sense of *comment*, see *Observe*.

The difference between *observance* and *observation* is no more than a modern tendency to restrict *observance* to the meaning *the keeping of a ritual or ceremony*. As meaning *the action of paying attention* the two are interchangeable.

### Occupancy.

*Occupancy* means *the condition of being an occupant*. It also means *the act of taking*, which is the ordinary meaning of *occupation*. In this sense, then, the two are interchangeable.

### Odds.

*Odds* was originally felt as a singular noun and is so still, as is shown by phrases like “What’s the odds?” Where it means *chances*, however, it sometimes takes a plural verb, as, “The odds are a hundred to one against you.”

### Of.

*Of* was formerly used with a number of prepositions in such expressions as “down of (from) his horse,” “up of (out of) the sea.” It is now obsolete in this use except in the two phrases *forth of* and *out of*. It appears in colloquial speech and dialect in *off of*.

Note that *out of* is incorrectly used for *of* to denote material, as, "The clapboards are made out of cypress."

As a sign of the possessive *of* may be the equivalent of 's, or be used with the 's in a somewhat different meaning. *A story of Mark Twain* would mean *a story related about Mark Twain*. *A story of Mark Twain's* would mean *one of Mark Twain's stories*, that is, written or told by Mark Twain.

For *of the name of* and similar phrases, see *By*.

*Of any* is, strictly speaking, illogical, unless it is qualified in some way. "This book is the best of any," would, if taken literally, mean that the book was better than itself. "This book is the best of any I have seen up to this time," expresses the meaning more exactly.

*Of* is used with a variety of verbs to express various relationships with nouns. With verbs of asking it expresses something like origin or agency, as with *ask*, *beseech*, *demand*, *desire*, *entreat*, and others. Analogous to these is its use with *taste* and *smell*, by some condemned as vulgar. With these verbs it seems to have a certain partitive sense, perhaps because both words appear as nouns with *of* in such phrases as *a taste of vanilla*, *a smell of paint*. It is correctly used with such verbs as *reck*, *repent*, *rue*, *beware*, in a relationship hardly to be distinguished from that of the direct object. See *Approve*, *Accept*, *Allow*, for verbs which take both constructions in different meanings; to these might be added *approve*, *conceive*, *recollect*. *Remember* and *forget* are not correctly used with *of*.

Either *of* or *to* may be used in expressions of time like "quarter of one."

The use of *of* in *four years of age* is a survival of an old usage of the preposition to define the reference of a statement of measure. In this sense it is correct to say *a child of four years* or *a child four years of age*, but not *a child of four years old*.

The expression *of all others* is now considered illogical in that *other* seems to exclude the object from the class in which *all* seems to place it. It is possible that *of* in this phrase at least may have had some such meaning as *selected from*. The phrase is a very old one, but is not now in good use. *Of* in the sense of *on*, as, "I sent him of an errand," is marked "obsolete, colloquial, or vulgar."

For *of* in such phrases as *all of them*, see *All*.

See also *Want*.

*Offhand*.

*Offhand* is preferable to *offhanded*. See *Second hand* and *Underhand*.

*Off of*.

See *Of*.

*Old*.

For *of four years old*, see *Of*.

*On*.

For *on* and *in* in such expressions as "I went on the train," see *In*.

For the combination *on to* the best usage demands the two words, though the one word, *onto* analogous

to *into* and *unto*, cannot be condemned as incorrect in most cases. It is incorrect in any case in which *on* is a part of the verb, and *to* a separate preposition governing a following noun—in other words, when *on* has one construction in the sentence, and *to* another entirely different one, as in the sentence, “I rode on to the next village.” Here *onto* would be manifestly incorrect.

For *on time*, see *In time*.

### One.

When *one* is used as an indefinite pronoun grammar demands that a following pronoun referring to it shall be in the third person singular, as, “One does not speak of himself.” More recent usage calls for the use of *one* in the second position also, as, “One does not go unless one is invited, does one?” This is sometimes so awkward that conscientious speakers who feel that they must observe the rule end by avoiding the construction, often by using the generic *you* (“You can’t go unless you are invited”). The masculine pronoun *he* or *him* would be logical to refer to *one*, since it is the generic pronoun for all mankind, including womankind.

In a sentence in which *one of those* is followed by a relative clause (“He is one of those who come early”) the verb of the relative clause is logically plural to agree with its subject *who*, which is in turn plural to agree with its antecedent *those*. When we say, “He is one of those who comes early,” we mean, “He is one who comes early,—he is one of that kind.” The construction is really *one who comes*, and the *of*

*those* makes the sentence ungrammatical, and is redundant except as it interpolates the idea of kind. The sentence may be used to express either one of two ideas: 1. He always comes early; 2. He is one of a certain class, *i.e.*, those who come early. It is when we wish to express the first idea that we use, loosely and ungrammatically, the singular verb. It often passes unnoticed in speech, the difference being that of a single *s*, and is possibly becoming idiomatic. A careful speaker, however, will always distinguish between the two ideas, and express each with precision.

For *one another* and *each other*, see *Each other*.

In such sentences as "I asked ten men, and not a one of them knew," the *a* is clearly redundant. If it means anything, it emphasizes the unity of *one* ("not a single one").

*One* and *ones* are correctly used in an absolute construction to avoid the repetition of a noun, as, "You may need an umbrella; be sure to carry one." It is challenged as redundant in such sentences as "I counted seven horses, four bay (ones) and three black (ones)." It is not censured in such expressions as "Which ones do you want?" "The blue ones." Here, in the answer at least, *ones* is more necessary than in the foregoing sentence.

In sentences in which *one or two* is the subject, the verb may agree with the nearest noun, as, "One or two of the delegates were coming down the aisle."

*Only.*

*Only* should immediately precede the word or phrase which it limits unless there can be no am-

biguity in its immediately following such word or phrase. Thus, "Only I saw him yesterday," means that no one else saw him. "I only saw him yesterday," means that I did nothing but see him. "I saw only him yesterday," means I saw no one else. "I saw him only yesterday," means that it was no longer ago than yesterday. "This car for ladies only," means that no others may use it.

Opposite.

See *Contrary*.

Or.

For *or* after negatives, see *Nor*.

Oral.

*Oral* means *communicated in spoken words*. In ordinary loose speech *verbal* means the same thing, though more strictly it means *having to do with words* or *communicated by words either spoken or written*. In common parlance *oral* and *verbal* mean the same thing.

Orate.

This word came into general use as an Americanism. It is what is called a back-formation from *oration* and was at first a provincialism. Its use is now chiefly humorous or sarcastic.

Other.

*Other* is required in such sentences as "I like it better than any other book I have seen." If *other* is omitted the sentence is clearly illogical, since the book in question is one that the speaker has seen.

*Other alternative* is not necessarily an illogical expression, since *alternative* may mean *a choice*. See *Alternative*.

See also *All* and *Any*.

**Ought.**

It has been said recently that *ought* is properly used to express moral obligation and *should* to express propriety. No such distinction has ever been felt by ordinary users of the words. For as long as their history is recorded both words have been used to express obligation or duty of any sort.

It should be noted that *ought* is an auxiliary expressing obligation added to the auxiliaries that express tense. Thus, "You *ought* not to have done it," is the proper form, in which the auxiliary *have* expressing tense is added to the verb *do* and not to the auxiliary *ought*.

**Our going.**

See *Me*.

**Ourselves.**

See *Herself* and *Myself*.

**Out loud.**

*Out loud* for *aloud* is a colloquialism.

**Out of.**

See *Of*.

**Outside.**

In the phrase *outside the barn*, *outside* is a preposition. In *the outside of the barn*, *outside* is a noun

limited by the possessive of *the barn*. *Of* is incorrect after the preposition *outside*. *Outside of*, meaning *except*, is a colloquial Americanism.

### Over.

*Over* is correctly used to mean *more than* in such expressions as "Over a pound," "Over a mile," "Over a dollar."

For *over his signature*, see *Signature*. For *over all*, see *All over*.

### Overly.

*Overly* is an adverb meaning *over much*; it has long been obsolete in England, but is found in Scotland and in the United States. American dictionaries call it dialect.

### Own up.

*Own up* in the sense of *make full admission, confess*, is colloquial.

## P

### Pains.

*Pains* meaning *trouble taken in accomplishing something*, commonly in the phrase "To take pains," is seldom used in any construction that demands a decision as to whether it is singular or plural. In modern usage it most often takes the plural verb or pronoun, as in Scott's lines, "Yet much he praised the pains he took, and well those pains did pay." It has, however, often been construed as a singular noun, probably as a collective equivalent to *effort*.

**Pair.**

We may correctly say either "a new pair of gloves" or "a pair of new gloves." See *New*.

**Pants.**

See p. 8.

**Paradox.**

The term *paradox* is applied both to statements which are actually self-contradictory and to those which merely appear to be so but are actually true. In the expression "a seeming paradox," which is sometimes condemned as illogical, *paradox* means *a self-contradictory statement*.

**Paraphernalia.**

*Paraphernalia* is allowable, though it has sometimes been challenged, in the sense of *equipment*, *appointments*, or *appurtenances*, of any kind specified or unspecified.

**Part.**

*Part* and *portion* may be used interchangeably. Both have in them an original idea of division, and though *portion* seems to carry more the idea of *allotment*, it is not necessary to restrict it to that sense.

**Partially.**

The first meaning of *partially* is *with partiality*. It is correctly used, however, in its secondary meaning, which is *incompletely*, *restrictedly*, *partly*.

**Party.**

*Party* is improperly used to mean merely *person*. It is rightly used of a single person considered in some

relation as "a party to an agreement." In the sense of *person* it is said by European observers to be in universal use in the United States. It is, however, condemned by American dictionaries no less than by the British as vulgar, humorous, or slangy in this sense.

#### Past.

*Past* is correctly used to mean *just passed* or *last*, as, "in the past few weeks." In this sense it is often used with *last*, as, "twenty years last past."

#### Patronize.

*Patronize* in the sense of *support with one's expenditure* or *custom, frequent, favor with one's presence*, is said to be commercial or colloquial usage. It is always more or less pompous when a speaker uses it of himself.

#### Pell-mell.

*Pell-mell* originally referred to the *disorderly, confused* action of a crowd. It is now widely used, however, to mean in *disorder* and *hurry, headlong, recklessly*, as often as not referring to the action of a single person.

#### Penny.

*Penny* for *cent* is colloquial.

#### People.

*People* is correctly used in referring to any particular *group* to which the speaker belongs, as *community, church, school*, and more specially *family*.

It applies in general to any collection of persons except one that is thought of as distinctively small. Thus one might say, "The hall was full of people," but if the contrary were the case would say, "There were only a few persons in the hall." We use *persons* when we think of individuals; *people* when we think of the group collectively.

#### Per.

*Per* has been used in so many Latin phrases current in English that it has now practically reached the status of an English preposition. Many phrases are current in which it is joined with English words, as *per bearer*, *per invoice*, *per day*, *per pound*, and the like. A careful speaker, however, will still restrict the use of *per* to the Latin phrase, that is, he will say either *per annum* or *by the year*, and not mix the two languages. All such phrases have English equivalents; as, *by the bearer*, *by (or according to the) invoice*, *a day*, *a pound*.

#### Per cent.

*Per cent.* may take either a singular or a plural verb, according as the speaker thinks of it as a unit or as a number of units; thus we may say, "Forty per cent. of the voters were Republicans," and, "Twenty per cent. is too much."

#### Perfect.

Logically, *perfect* can have neither comparative nor superlative. Loosely, however, we use the terms *more perfect* and *most perfect* to mean *more* or *most*

*nearly approaching perfection.* See also *Chiefest, Unique, Most, Full.*

**Permit.**

See *Allow.*

**Perspicacity.**

*Perspicacity* means *clearness of understanding, penetration, discernment.* *Perspicuity* means *lucidity, freedom from obscurity, clearness of statement,* and is improperly used to mean *perspicacity.*

**Persuade.**

*Persuade* is hardly to be distinguished from *convince.* It means *to lead a person to accept a statement or opinion,* whereas *to convince* means *to force him to a belief by argument.* The main difference is that *persuasion* may lead to action, but not necessarily to belief; *conviction* may not involve action. You may convince a man that he should act, but be unable to persuade him to act on the conviction. You may persuade him to act against his convictions.

**Pertain.**

See *Appertain.*

**Pessimist.**

Philosophically speaking, a *pessimist* is one who believes that this world is the worst possible and that naturally everything tends toward evil. Colloquially the *pessimist* is not one who believes that the stars run blindly in their courses, but any one who thinks, whether the opinion be well founded or not,

that it will rain on the day of the picnic. We seem to have discarded the older slang term *calamity-howler* in favor of one that is no less slangy because it is found in the pages of Schopenhauer. For *pejorative* as it is commonly used *gloomy* or *unfavorable* would be quite strong enough.

#### Phenomenon.

*Phenomenon* is a singular noun. Its plural is *phenomena*. It is properly used to mean *an extraordinary or highly exceptional occurrence*. Through the phrasing of the circus or theatrical poster and other advertising matter, it acquired the colloquial meaning a *prodigy*, especially as applied to some *person* or *animal*.

#### Phone.

See p. 8.

#### Photo.

As a colloquial abbreviation of *photograph* this word has been current for nearly fifty years, but it is not yet in good use.

#### Physics.

This word, like *ethics*, *politics*, *mathematics*, and the like, was originally a collective plural, meaning *natural things*. It is now, however, universally construed as a singular.

#### Piffle.

See p. 9.

This word is defined in the *Oxford Dictionary* as *to talk or act in a trifling, feeble, or ineffective way*.

It seems to have been in use in this sense since the middle of the last century. In 1890 the *Saturday Review* quoted it as a university phrase.

Please.

See *Inclosed please find.*

Plenty.

*Plenty* has been condemned as an adjective on two counts: first, that it is a noun and not an adjective, and that for the adjective we should use *plentiful*; second, that when used as an adjective it should apply to quantity and not to number. As a noun *plenty* may refer to either quantity or number. As an adjective it was once in good use, but is now set down as chiefly colloquial either as a predicate adjective, as "Money is plenty," or in the phrase "Plenty of." It is also colloquial in its quasi-adverbial use, as, *plenty large enough.*

Plurality.

See *Majority.*

P.M.

See *A.M.*

Point of view.

*Point of view* is still preferred by careful speakers to *viewpoint*. *Viewpoint*, however, has made much headway in spite of the severe attacks upon it. It is likely to establish itself and may safely be accepted. See also *Standpoint*.

**Politics.**

*Politics* was originally a plural noun and is now construed as either singular or plural. The modern tendency is perhaps to make it singular, as, “*Politics* is his only interest.”

**Poorly.**

*Poorly* is the opposite of *nicely* as answer to the question, “How do you do?” Both are condemned by American authorities. See *Nicely*.

**Portion.**

See *Part*.

**Post.**

See *Mail*.

**Posted.**

See *Informed*.

**Practicable.**

*Practicable* differs from *practical* when it applies to principles as meaning *capable of being put into practice, feasible*. *Practical* often applies to persons whose knowledge is derived from practice rather than from theory. The two come very close together in meaning as applied to things, when *practicable* means *capable of being actually used*, and *practical* means *capable of being turned to account, practically useful*.

**Precision.**

See pp. 10-12,

### Predicate.

As a verb *predicate* should not be confused with *predict*. It means to *assert*, *affirm*, or technically in logic to *make a term the predicate in a proposition*. *Predict* means to *foretell*. For grammatical uses of *predicate*, see Glossary, Part III.

### Prejudice.

*Prejudice* means primarily to *affect injuriously or unfavorably*. Hence *prejudice* usually means *influenced against*, whereas *prepossess* most commonly means *influenced in favor of*. The phrase *prejudiced in his favor* is widely current. Doubtless it gained popularity from its paradoxical form, and though it has been attacked it is to some extent justified by the fact that *prejudiced* is defined as *prepossessed*.

### Present.

The use of *present* for *introduce* was originally a bit of social pretension. *Present* means to *bring into the presence of* or *introduce formally or ceremoniously*, as to *bring a subject before a sovereign*. *Introduce* is the better word for the ordinary bringing together of friends or acquaintances.

### Present use.

See "Guiding Principles," p. 4.

### Presumptive.

*Presumptive* originally meant the same as *presumptuous* but is now obsolete in that sense. It now means either *giving reasonable grounds for belief*, or

*based on presumption or inference.* *Presumptuous* means *unduly confident, presuming, impertinent.*

Pretty.

*Pretty* as an adverb is correctly used to mean *considerably, fairly, rather.* In these senses, however, it always has a slightly colloquial or familiar flavor.

Prevention.

Either *prevention* or *preventive* may be used to mean a means of *preventing.* *Preventative*, though often condemned as a useless modern formation, has been in good use as an adjective since the middle of the seventeenth century and as a noun since the middle of the eighteenth century. *Preventive* is now generally preferred.

Previous.

Both *previous* and *previously* may correctly be used adverbially. *Previous* is also an adjective.

Principal and Principle.

*Principle* is never an adjective; it is a noun meaning *a fundamental truth or a rule of conduct.* *Principal* is usually an adjective meaning *chief*, often a noun meaning *chief person or a sum of money at interest.*

Probe.

*Probe for investigation* is a recent formation due to the exigencies of writing newspaper head-lines of

column width. It has proved so useful in the vocabulary of the city editor and the copy-reader that it bids fair to establish itself in the language. The New York *Evening Post* says to its reporters, "*Probe* for investigation may be used, but should not be over-worked."

### Propose.

*Propose* and *intend* often come so close together in meaning that they cannot be distinguished. When *propose* means *to propose to oneself, bring forward in one's mind something that one is going to do*, it means nothing more nor less than *intend*. In this sense it is defensible in such a sentence as "I don't propose to be insulted any longer."

### Proposition.

*Proposition* is properly used to mean *a formal statement of truth to be demonstrated* or more loosely *a basis for discussion*. When it is applied to anything and everything from a piece of chewing-gum to a war between two sovereign nations it is nothing but slang.

### Proven.

This form is the Scotch past participle which survives in certain law phrases. *Proved* is the right word for ordinary use.

### Providing.

Either *provided* or *providing* may be correctly used in such sentences as "I will go, providing it does not

rain." This is a regular grammatical use of the present participle.

## Q

Quantity.

*Quantity* is incorrectly used for *number* in such sentences as "There was a great quantity of people there."

Quarter of (to) one.

See *Of* or *To*.

Query.

*Query* as a transitive verb meaning *to put as a question* is marked obsolete. It appears, however, as a more or less technical newspaper word meaning *to make inquiry of an editor as to the possibility of his using certain material*, as, "I queried the Kansas City *Star* about a story."

Quit.

The ordinary modern sense of *quit* is *to go away or depart from a place or person, to part or separate from a thing*. It may also mean *renounce*, or *let go*. In the eighteenth century and earlier it was used to mean *stop, discontinue*, and it survives in colloquial and dialect use in this sense in the United States. It has recently been asked "why this generally recognized usage should fall under the ban." The answer is that it is generally recognized as vulgar.

Quite.

*Quite* in its weaker sense means *actually, really, positively*. This is its meaning in the large number

of phrases in which it precedes the indefinite article, as *quite a large party*. In many of these phrases the meaning is so weakened that colloquially it means but little more than *rather* and so works around to something nearly the opposite of its original meaning, which was *completely, entirely*.

## R

### Rabbit.

*Rabbit* not *rarebit* is now the accepted form in the phrase *welsh rabbit*. The term is probably of slang formation like *Cape Cod turkey* for *codfish* or *Munster plums* for *potatoes*, and doubtless has nothing to do with the supposed rarity of the concoction.

### Raise.

*Raise* should be distinguished from another word similar in sound but in one sense nearly the opposite in meaning, *raze*, which as applied to a building or town means *to sweep away, efface completely*. *Raise* is correctly used to mean *to produce a supply of*, as of soldiers or sailors, or *to breed and bring up*, as applied to animals. As applied to persons meaning *to rear, bring up*, it is now little used outside of the United States. It is in good general use as applied to plants, vegetables, and trees.

*Raise* is not in good use as meaning *an increase in salary* ("Did you get your *raise* last week?"). The *Oxford Dictionary* does not condemn it in the sense of *an increase in amount*, and gives two examples of its use since 1890, both relating to gambling, one American and one English. *Rise* is correct in this sense,

but is rarely heard. *Increase* is the best available word. For *rise* and *raise* as verbs, see *Rise*.

**Rang.**

See *Ring*.

**Rarely ever.**

*Rarely ever* is an old phrase probably elliptical for *rarely if ever*. *Rarely or ever* arises by confusion of the two phrases *rarely if ever* and *rarely or never*. The last two phrases are the correct ones; *rarely ever*, though it may be idiomatic, having fallen into disuse. *Seldom* is preferred to *rarely* in such sentences as "I rarely go there," on the ground that *rarely* means *unusually, uncommonly*.

**Rather.**

For *had rather*, see *Have*.

**Real.**

The use of *real* meaning *very* or *extremely*, as, "It looks real nice," "I was real put out," is said to belong to Scottish and American dialect.

**Reason.**

A substantive clause following *reason* or *reason why* should be introduced by *that*, as, "The reason why I went was that I was urgently called."

**Recall.**

See *Recollect*.

**Receipt.**

*Receipt* and *recipe* are both correctly used to mean a statement of the ingredients and method of preparing some compound especially in cookery.

Reck of.

See *Of*.

Reckon.

*I reckon* as the equivalent of the colloquial *I guess* is a survival in the Southern States of America of seventeenth-century literary usage. The expression still survives also in some dialects in England.

Recollect.

“Recollect when distinguished from *remember* implies a *conscious or express effort of memory to recall something which does not spontaneously rise to the mind*” (*Oxford Dictionary*). Both *recollect* and *remember* are given as definitions of *recall*.

Recompense.

Both *recompense* and *compensate* are correctly used to mean *give compensation to a person for loss or injury, or to make up for, take the place of*.

Recuperate.

*Recuperate* in the sense of *recover from exhaustion, ill health, pecuniary loss, etc.*, was severely condemned as an unnecessary new formation some fifty years ago. It is now, however, the chief meaning of the word.

Reduce.

*Reduce* is properly used of diminution in either number or quantity. It may be used interchangeably with *lessen*.

**Refute.**

To *refute* a person is to *confute* him, *prove him in error*. To *refute* a statement, opinion, accusation, imputation, or charge, is not merely to call it in question, or deny it without proof, but to *disprove* it, *overthrow it by argument, show it to be false*.

**Regard.**

As omitted after, see *As*.

**Relation.**

Both *relation* and *relative* are correctly used to mean *kinsman* or *kinswoman*, and in the plural *kins-folk*, *kindred*. They are in equally good use.

**Relative.**

*Relative* is sometimes used incorrectly as an adverb, as, "Mr. Smith said, relative to the main question, that," etc. *Relatively* would be correct here meaning *with reference to*; better would be "Mr. Smith spoke on the main question, saying," etc. *Relative* is, of course, correctly used as an adjective in, "What Mr. Smith said was relative to the main question."

**Reliable.**

On this word the *Oxford Dictionary* says:

In current use only from about 1850, and at first perhaps more frequent in American works, but from 1855 freely employed by British writers, though often protested against as an innovation or an Americanism. The formation has been objected to (as by Worcester in 1860) on the ground of irregularity, but has analogies in *available*,

*dependable, dispensable, laughable* (Webster, 1864). The question has been fully discussed by F. Hall in his work *On English Adjectives in -able, with special reference to Reliable* (1877).

Any one who wishes to avoid *reliable* will find *trustworthy* an acceptable substitute.

**Remainder.**

See *Balance*.

**Remains.**

*Remains* is sometimes construed as a singular noun, but it is customarily plural, taking a plural verb. The assertion that "there is no such singular noun as *remain*" is an error; the form occurs not infrequently before the middle of the nineteenth century. Since that time the plural noun has been preferred.

**Remember.**

See *Recollect* and *Of*.

**Remit.**

The facts do not bear out the assertion that "*remit* should not be used in place of *send*; *remit* means *to send back*."

*Remit* does not mean *send back* except in the phrases now rare, *remit to prison*, *remit to custody*. It does not mean *send* in ordinary senses, but has the special meaning *to send money or valuables*, used either with direct and indirect objects, as, "Remit me a hundred dollars," or absolutely, as, "He was compelled to remit," "Please remit."

**Remote.**

In many of their meanings, dictionaries make no distinction between *remote* and *distant*. It has been suggested, however, that we feel a difference in practice, as is shown by the difference in usage between the phrases *distant relatives* and *remote ancestors*. Is not the difference one of accessibility? A *distant relative* may be where one can get at him, but *remote ancestors* are beyond one's reach.

**Rendition.**

*Rendition* means *rendering*, either in the sense of a *translation*, or the *performing* of a piece of music or *acting* a play or part, and is said by British dictionaries to be American usage. It is recognized in both senses by American dictionaries.

**Repent of.**

See *Of*.

**Replace.**

*Replace* is challenged in such sentences as "Captain Smith was ordered to the camp to replace Captain Jones," on the ground that it ought to mean *put Captain Jones back in his place*. If the objection seems valid, use *succeed*.

**Reputable use.**

See "Guiding Principles," pp. 4-10.

**Reside.**

In cases where *reside* means merely *live*, *live* is preferable according to the principle of simplicity

(see p. 14). *Reside* is correctly used of rulers and officials "in residence."

### Residence.

*Residence* means *dwelling-place*, but it is usually applied to the abode of a person of distinction. Where *house* conveys the right idea it is preferable according to the rule of simplicity (see p. 14). *Residence* meaning *house* is usually applied to a house of a superior kind, a mansion. See also *Home*.

### Respectively.

*Respectively* usually means *each to each*, or *in the order named*, as, "Smith, Brown, and Jones received five, ten, and fifteen dollars, respectively." It should not be confused with *respectfully* or *respectably*.

### Resurrect.

This is a back-formation from *resurrection*, now accepted in the sense of *restore to life* from death or from the grave, or figuratively *to revive* as of a principle or legislative measure. In the sense of *disinter* it is highly questionable.

### Revenge.

See *Avenge*.

### Reverend.

*Rev.* should not be used without the article as a title, unless it be in the address of a letter. See *Hon.*

As a common adjective, *reverend* means *worthy of deep respect*. It should be distinguished from *reverent*, which means *having, feeling, or showing reverence*.

Reverse.

See *Contrary*.

Riches.

*Riches* was originally a variant of the abstract noun *richesse*. It has the form of a plural and is commonly construed with plural verbs and pronouns.

Ride.

See *Drive*.

Right.

As a noun *right* should not be confused with *obligation*. In the sentence "Women have as good a right to have to stand as men," *as good a right* should be *the same obligation*. The adjective *right* is correctly used to mean *proper* or *appropriate*, as in the phrase *the right man in the right place*. Such phrases as *right off*, *right away* are American survivals of an old use of adverbial *right*. They are in good colloquial use. The use of *right* to mean *exactly* in all adverbial phrases such as *right now*, *right there*, *right at the threshold*, and the like are called dialect or archaic by British dictionaries and chiefly colloquial by American dictionaries.

Ring.

Of this verb the proper form for the past tense is either *rang* or *rung*; the past participle should always be *rung*.

Rise.

*Rise* and *arise* are interchangeable in meaning. There seems to be a tendency to use *arise* when the

sense of the verb is figurative, as, for example, when it applies to *complications*, *troubles*, *situations*, and the like. The difference between *rise* and *raise* is that *raise* is a causative verb meaning *to cause to rise*. The principal parts of *rise* are present, *rise*; past, *rose*; past participle, *risen*. Of *raise* they are *raise*, *raised*, *raised*.

For *rise* and *raise* as nouns, see *Raise*.

Rue of.

See *Of*.

Run.

*Run* in the sense of *operate* is recognized as applied to ships and to mechanical contrivances such as engines and mills. As applied to a business, meaning *conduct* or *carry on*, it is called an Americanism.

## S

Sabbath.

*Sabbath* is strictly the seventh day of the week. *Sunday* is the first. As a rule *Sunday* is spoken of as the *Sabbath* only as an indication of some special creed or belief on the part of the speaker.

Same.

The use of *same* to mean *it*, as in "We have your order for one barrel of flour and have shipped same by freight," is a piece of business slang probably taken over from technical legal phrases. *It* is always better even in business letters.

**Sample.**

*Sample* as noun and verb is now chiefly confined to commercial uses. As a verb it is correctly used to mean *to judge of the quality of a thing by specimen*. In senses other than commercial, meaning merely *to partake of*, as, "Won't you sample the ice-cream?" it is commercial slang.

**Sanatorium.**

*Sanatorium* and *sanitarium* are given as variant forms for the same word. American dictionaries note a growing tendency to distinguish between the two by using *sanatorium* to mean *a place where healing is carried on by active measures* and *sanitarium* to designate *a place where climate or other conditions are supposed to be favorable to healing*. *Sanatarium* is not recognized as a legitimate form of the word.

**Sanatory.**

*Sanatory* means *primarily conducive to healing, curative*. It is misused to mean *pertaining to health*, which is one of the common meanings of *sanitary*. *Sanitary* as applied to objects which are contrived with a view to *sanitary requirements* means something very much like *sanatory*. Most commonly, however, *sanitary* means *pertaining to the conditions affecting health*. It will be seen that *sanatory* applies only to *conditions which are good*, whereas *sanitary* conditions, those which pertain to health, may be good, bad, or indifferent.

**Sang.**

See *Sing.*

Sank.

See *Sink*.

Save.

As preposition and conjunction meaning *except*, *but for*, *save* and *saving* may be used interchangeably. Neither has very much colloquial use to-day.

Saw.

*Saw* is the past tense of the verb *to see*, and *seen* the past participle. It follows that *seen* is incorrectly used when it is used without an auxiliary such as *have, has, had, was, is*.

Say.

*It says in the book* meaning *the book or the author thereof says* is colloquial. *Says I, says he, says you*, and the like for *I said, etc.*, belong only in vulgar speech or humorous imitations of it. *I say* is colloquial in England; the corresponding *say* of American speech is called colloquial by the dictionaries, but seems to many who hear it daily more justly described as a bad habit. A German observer of American speech calls it current American usage. *Say* is to be avoided in the sense of *voice, influence, vote, as, "He has no say in this business."*

Scarcely.

See *Hardly* and *Can't hardly*.

Scholar.

*Scholar* means either a child attending an elementary school or a very learned or erudite person. *Pupil* or-

dinarily means *a boy or girl attending school*. The term *student* commonly signifies *one who attends a college*.

### School.

*School* may properly be applied to almost any institution where instruction is given. In the United States it commonly means either *an institution below the grade of a college* or *one of the graduate departments of a university*. Those connected with the college itself do not commonly speak of it as a *school*. Neither is the phrase *going to school* usually applied to one who attends *a graduate school* of law or medicine.

*School* is correctly used to mean a *shoal* or large number of fish.

### Second hand.

*Second hand* is properly used as an adjective. *Second-handed*, an old formation of an adjective from the noun *second hand*, is now obsolete.

### Secondly.

See *First*.

### Section.

*Section*, meaning *a portion of a country*, is recognized by American dictionaries. The *Oxford Dictionary* recognizes it, but declares that it is used chiefly in America.

### Secure.

The primary meaning of *secure* in English is *free from care or anxiety*. The original meaning in Latin

*safe, free from danger*, is a secondary but entirely legitimate meaning in English.

See.

See *Witness*.

Seem.

*Seem* is called redundant in such expressions as "I can't seem to find it," "I can't seem to remember." As colloquially used, however, these expressions probably have a slightly different meaning from "I can't find it" and "I can't remember." More formally expressed the idea would be "It would seem that I ought to be able to find it, but for some reason not easily explained I cannot." *Seem*, then, applies to a verb (*ought*) which is not expressed. The distinction between *seem* and *appear*, that "what seems is in the mind, what appears is external," is not borne out by the facts. Examples show that the two are used indifferently of both objective and subjective matters.

Seldom.

The phrases *seldom if ever* and *seldom or never* mean essentially the same thing and are both in good use. *Seldom ever* is said to be obsolete and *seldom or ever* is illogical, a mere confusion of the other two. (See *Rarely*.) The objection to *seldom or never* is made on logical grounds; that if an action occurs *seldom* it is untrue that it *never* occurs, and *vice versa*. Doubtless the phrase is elliptical for "I go *seldom* or (perhaps it would be nearer the fact to say) *never*";

a useful condensation of the chorus and solo: "What, never?" "Well,—hardly ever!"

Semi-occasional.

*Semi-occasional* appears in the *Oxford Dictionary* as an Americanism. It does not appear at all in American dictionaries.

Sensual.

*Sensual* in its common meaning to-day means *absorbed in the life of the senses*, usually *voluptuous*, often *unchaste*. *Sensuous* means *pertaining to the senses*, or, as applied to pleasure, *achieved through the senses*. It has no evil implication.

Set.

*Set* is the causative of the verb *to sit*. Its principal parts are present, *sit*; past, *set*; past participle, *set*. Those of *sit* are present, *sit*; past, *sat*; past participle, *sat*. *Set* has a great number of meanings of which the commonest are those which are based on its causative significance *to cause or make to sit, to place*. As applied to the heavenly bodies it has a special meaning *to go down*. As applied to hens and other fowl *sit* is doubtless the correct word, but *set* has been so widely used colloquially that it is almost technical in this sense.

Settle.

*Settle* is correctly used transitively meaning *to close an account by making final payment*, and *to pay a bill*. It is used absolutely or intransitively, usually

followed by *with* and the name of a person or a firm, meaning *to settle accounts by payment*.

Shall and will.<sup>1</sup>

The auxiliaries *shall*, *will*, *should*, and *would* are used to express two kinds of future action; first, "simple futurity," that which "is going" to happen in the natural course of events; second, "volition," that which is to be made to happen through consent, desire, compulsion, or prophecy.

To express simple futurity in direct discourse the auxiliary is conjugated:

I shall	we shall
you will	you will
he will	they will

To express volition in direct discourse the forms are:

I will	we will
you shall	you shall
he shall	they shall

In a question, use the form expected in the answer. If the question is as to what is going to happen (simple futurity) use the form which the person who replies would use to indicate simple futurity. If you expect a promise, or consider that the person who answers has any control over the course of the event, use the form he would use to express volition.

The question "Will I?" ("Will I scrub the kitchen floor now, ma'am?") is always a conundrum, for

<sup>1</sup> This discussion of *Shall and will* is from the author's *Guide to Good English*, Harper & Brothers, 1914.

when you ask it you ask some one else about your intentions, a matter on which you yourself hold the only certain knowledge. It is correctly used only as an echo, usually ironical, of another speaker's words, as: "You will now, if you please, do as I told you to in the first place." "Will I, indeed!"

If the question is not ironical, the auxiliary in the answer is likely to be *shall*. "You will find spherical trigonometry a very difficult study." "Shall I?"

If the second speaker expected any answer, it would be, "You will," and he would use *will* in his question. He uses *shall* because he expects no answer; his question is perfunctory, and means no more than "Indeed?"

A direct command from one who might rightly use terms of volition (compulsion) is often put in terms of mere futurity as a matter of courtesy. "You will proceed at once with your entire command to the support of General McVickar."

The forms indicating volition are used in inspired and prophetic language, perhaps because the speaker as a prophet is supposed to feel some sort of control over future events, or because he is indicating some degree of compulsion on the part of some power which has such control. "And the desert shall blossom as the rose." "And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame." "And there shall be no more death."

In direct discourse use *should* where the direct form has *shall*, and *would* where the direct form has *will*.

*Direct:* I shall go, and Tom will go, and as for Ned, he shall go or I will know the reason why. Shall you go?

*Indirect:* Jack said he should go, and Tom would, and that Ned should or he would know the reason why, and he asked whether I should go.

See *I*, *You*, *He*, and other pronouns.

#### Shine.

*Shine* as a transitive verb meaning *to polish* is said to be an Americanism. It is not condemned by American dictionaries except in the sense *to black boots*, which is called colloquial.

#### Show.

*Show* has long been used, especially in the plural, as a generic term for entertaining exhibitions of all sorts. Its use specifically to mean *a dramatic performance in a theater* is colloquial or humorous. The phrase *show down* has recently been called by an English commentator on American diction a piece of commercial slang. Every American knows that it comes from the game of poker and is slang as applied to everything else.

*Show*, meaning chance ("He hasn't a ghost of a show"), is colloquial.

#### Shrink.

*Shrink* has for its past tense *shrank* and for its past participle *shrunk*.

Sick.

See *Ill.*

Sidewise.

See *Endwise*. .

Sight.

*Sight* in the sense of *a great deal*, as *a sight of thanks*, was once good usage, but is now colloquial or slang. It probably comes from *sight* in the sense of *a feature or object worth seeing*. Hence *a show or display of something* and so *a great number or quantity*.

Signature.

The accepted phrase is *under his signature*, *under the signature of*, and not *over*. It is doubtless the same as the legal phrase *given under my hand and seal*, and probably means something like *under the warrant or guarantee*.

Sin.

See *Crime*.

Since.

See *Ago*.

As a conjunction *since* is said to be legitimately used for *that*, as, “It is now fourscore years since he has plagued all those who have any dependence on him.” This may be allowable, but certainly *that* would be clearer.

*Since* does not mean merely *because*, but rather *because that, in view of the fact that, inasmuch as*. In “Since I am sleepy, I will go to bed,” *since* is in-

correct, for it is not *in view of the fact* that the speaker is sleepy that he goes to bed, but *because* he is sleepy.

### Sing.

The past tense of *sing* may be either *sang* or *sung*, the past participle is *sung*. Of the past tense Tennyson uses both forms in one stanza of "In Memoriam" ,

Then echo like our voices rang;  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him,  
Last year: impetuously we sang.

Professor J. F. Genung has noted that in "In Memoriam" Tennyson uses *sang* sixty-four times and *sung* thirteen times, as the past tense.

### Sit.

See *Set*.

### Slang.

See "Guiding Principles," pp. 5-10.

### Slip one over.

See p. 9.

### Smart.

*Smart* in the sense of *brisk, vigorous*, is correct. In the sense of *considerable in numbers* as *right smart, a smart chance*, it is in provincial and dialect use in the United States. Dictionaries call it obso-

lete and rare as meaning *pert* or *impudent*, but it is neither obsolete nor rare in this sense among children, or even among their elders in certain parts of the United States. It is used chiefly in America to mean *clever in general*, especially *adept in looking after oneself*. It is said to be legitimately used of persons to mean *clever in talk or argument*, and of sayings to mean *clever or witty*. It is allowable, when used of persons, to mean *alert*, and *brisk*, also to mean *neatly dressed*. It is correctly used of dress to mean *neat*, *trim*, and *stylish*.

Smell of.

See *Of.*

So.

For *so* and *as* in negative and positive constructions, see *As*. *So* is legitimately used without correlative *that* indicating measure or degree, meaning *to that extent*, as, "They could not enforce a law so severe." From this comes its use in affirmative clauses as a weak intensive with no suggestion of comparison, meaning hardly so much as *very* (unless stressed in speech), as, "He looked so foolish," "You are so kind," "not so bad."

So long.

This and *see you later* hold their ground as colloquial phrases of informal parting and probably will do so until we can agree upon some equivalent for the useful *au revoir*, *auf wiedersehen*, *Hasta la visita*, of European languages.

**Sociable.**

Either *sociable* or *social* may be used to mean *inclined to seek and enjoy the company of others, disposed to friendly intercourse*.

**Society.**

*Society* in the sense of *the aggregate of persons living in a community* is commonly construed as a singular noun.

**Some.**

*Some* is properly used in the sense of *about, approximately*, as, "I have known him *some* twenty years." As an adverb meaning *a little, somewhat*, it is said to be Scottish, and northern dialect in England. It is said to be allowable with verbs meaning *a certain amount, a little*, as, "He hunted *some*, and fished *some*." In the sense of *somewhat*, as, "I am *some* better," it is called an Americanism by British dictionaries and colloquial by American dictionaries. Its emphatic use as adverb and adjective was colloquial in the middle of the last century, but has lately had much vogue as slang. For *some good*, see *Good*.

**Something.**

*Something* was formerly much used adverbially, meaning *to some extent, somewhat*. Nowadays, however, it is seldom used in this sense except where it is

felt to have some force as a noun, as, "We ran the whole distance in something less than an hour."

### Sort.

*Sort of* is misused exactly as is *kind of*. See *Kind*.

### Sounds good.

For verbs that take the adjective rather than the adverb, see *Bad*. The phrase *that sounds good to me*, as a general expression of approval, is slang.

### Spare.

*Spare* is not the exact equivalent of *grant* or *vouchsafe*. It means in this sense *give* or *yield up* and strongly suggests reluctance in the parting. Thus, one who says, "You might have spared some praise for him," implies that the praise, if it had been given, would have been given reluctantly.

### Sparrow-grass.

This word has no standing in English except as a dialect form arising as a vulgar corruption from *asparagus*.

### Speak.

The distinction between *speak* and *talk* is fanciful; meaning for meaning, the two are exactly parallel.

### Special.

See *Especial*.

### Speciality.

In their ordinary meanings *specialty* and *speciality* cannot be distinguished.

Spectators.

See *Audience*.

Spell.

*Spell* in the sense of *a space of time* of indefinite duration, usually short, is colloquial, as it is also in the sense of a *bad turn*, *a short period of illness*. It is said to be allowable, however, in the sense of *a time devoted to rest or relaxation*.

Splendid.

*Splendid* as a term of general approbation is colloquial. See *Nice* and *Awful*.

Split infinitive.

See *To*.

Spoonful.

See *Cupful*.

Spring.

The past tense of *spring* is either *sprang* or *sprung*. The past participle is *sprung*.

Stand.

One of the accepted meanings of *stand* as a transitive verb is *to put up with, tolerate, endure*. *Stand for* legitimately means a number of things, among others *to stand sponsor for*. It would seem then that *for* is redundant with *stand* to mean *endure* unless one wishes to turn the legitimate phrase into slang.

Standpoint.

*Standpoint* is legitimately used to mean *a mental point of view*. It has been censured, as has *viewpoint*, but must be admitted as good usage.

**Start.**

*Start* means *begin* as applied to a process or course of action. This is a secondary meaning from the primary one, which is *to leap* or *spring* and so *spring to life*. Thus one may *start* anything which may be thought of as continuing in motion. We may *start* a journey, a train of thought, or an engine, but not a book, if one refers to the reading of it. *To start* a magazine ought to mean *to found a magazine*, not *to begin to read a number of a magazine*. In the phrase *he started for the door*, *start* is legitimately used in the sense of either *spring toward* or *to begin a journey*.

**State.**

*State* is often misused for *say*, *declare*, or *assert*. *State* means properly *to set forth fully and in definite form*. It applies properly only to formal matters set forth in detail. It is misused in such sentences as "He *stated* that he felt much better," unless the assertion is made upon oath.

**Stationary.**

*Stationary* is ordinarily an adjective meaning *having a fixed station or place* or *remaining unchanged or unmoved*. *Stationery* is a noun meaning *writing-materials* or other articles sold by a stationer.

**Stimulant.**

*Stimulant* and *stimulus* are interchangeable in their common meaning. In ordinary use there is a tendency to use *stimulant* as applied to *any medicine or agent which temporarily stimulates a physiologic process*, whereas we usually use *stimulus* to mean some-

*thing that excites or rouses the mind or spirits, that which incites to action.*

### Stop.

*Stop* has long been in good use in the sense of *tarry* or *remain*. Modern usage, however, tends to use *stay* in this sense and *stop* in the sense of *to cease from motion*, as, "The train stopped at Chicago but I did not stay there."

### Stricken.

*Stricken* is an old past participle of *strike* now used only in a special sense meaning *wounded* or *afflicted*. *Struck* may be used in the same sense, and also in all senses as the past participle of *strike*.

### Subjunctive.

See *As*, and Glossary, Part III.

### Subtile.

*Subtile* and *subtle* have the same meaning in all their current senses. The only uses in which they differ are a few that are either technical or obsolete.

### Such.

*Such* is properly used to emphasize an obvious quality in such constructions as *never had such music been heard*. It is colloquial, however, when used as an absolute intensive followed by the article, as, "I never saw such a beautiful sight." More formally this would be "I never saw a sight so beautiful." Note that *so* may be correctly used in such sentences. See *So*.

*Such like* has recently been condemned as a pleonasm. It is, however, a very old phrase, and has been in reputable use for centuries, both as an adjective and as a pronoun.

### Suicide.

*Suicide* as a verb is defined without comment by the *Oxford Dictionary*. Seemingly, it is tacitly approved. The *Century Dictionary* calls it slang. In a quotation from an English newspaper in 1898 it is called a convenient piece of French slang. Other examples show it as used only by newspapers except where reputable writers use it more or less jocosely.

### Summons.

*Summons* in the sense of a *call*, particularly a *command*, to attend some public duty is now commonly used for both the singular and plural forms. *Summonses* is a correct form, but is now falling into disuse. *Summons* as a verb meaning *to serve with a summons* is called colloquial. *Summon* is correctly used in this sense.

### Suppose.

A careful speaker will distinguish between *suppose* and *expect*. The commonest meaning of *suppose* is *to assume as true without examining proofs, presume, hold as an opinion, believe*. *Expect* means *look forward to* and applies to events which we cannot control. See *Expect*.

### Sure.

Such phrases as *be sure* ("Be sure to come"), *sure enough*, *to be sure*, though widely used by good

speakers, are called colloquial by the *Century Dictionary*. On the other hand, the adverbial *sure*, meaning *certainly*, is not censured. It is indeed very old usage, as in "He is bewitched, sure," from a seventeenth-century play. In its modern revival, however, it seems to stand somewhere between slang and colloquialism.

Swim.

The past tense of *swim* is either *swam* or *swum*, though recent usage tends toward *swam*. The past participle is *swum*.

## T

Talented.

Walter Savage Landor once commented on this word as follows:

I regret to see that vile and barbarous vocable talented stealing out of the newspapers into the leading reviews and most respectable publications of the day. Why not shillinged, farthinged, tenpenced, etc.? The formation of a passive participle from a noun is a license that nothing but a very peculiar felicity can excuse.

This comment indicates a fundamental misconception of the meaning of *-ed* as a suffix. It does not always indicate the past tense or past participle of a weak verb, but may be added to a noun to form an adjective meaning *provided with*. (See Introduction, p. iv.) Thus when Shakespeare speaks of the soldier as "bearded like a pard" he means that he is provided with a beard like that of a leopard.

*Bearded* in such a phrase as “he bearded the lion in his den” is the participle of a verb *to beard* in a special sense. Such adjectives as *shillinged*, *farthinged*, and *tenpenced* are quite within the bounds of possibility; indeed, we already have *moneyed* in current use. See *Moneyed*.

**Talk.**

See *Speak*.

**Taste of.**

See *Of*.

**Tastily.**

*Tastily*, meaning *tastefully, in good taste*, is colloquial.

**Team.**

*Team* properly means *a number of persons associated in some joint action or two or more draft animals together with the vehicle which they draw*. A horse and a vehicle working together do not make a team except in dialect. To apply the word to the vehicle without the animal is provincial usage in some parts of the United States.

**Teaspoonful.**

See *Cupful*.

**Technical words.**

See “*Guiding Principles*,” p. 4.

**Teetotaler.**

See p. 9.

**Tend.**

*Tend* is obsolete or dialect in most of the senses in which it is confused with *attend*, as, for example, *to tend a shop, a business, a baby, or a sick person*. The only ordinary sense in which it is allowable is *to care for or cultivate a plant or to operate or care for a machine*. *Tend on* in the sense of *attend* is allowable, as in Tennyson's line, "And Enid tended on him there."

**Terrible.**

See *Awful*.

**Than.**

*Than* is a conjunctive particle normally used after comparatives of adjectives and adverbs, and after certain other words that are similar in use in that they are followed by a second member corresponding to the second member of a comparison. *Than* rather than *but* is the regular form after *else* and *other*. It is sometimes used after *different* (see *Different*), *diverse*, and *opposite*. Note that it is not a preposition and that when it is followed by a pronoun the pronoun takes its case from its relation to the previous verb. Thus, "It is none other than I," means "It is I, none other." See similar constructions with *But*.

The phrase *than whom* as in Milton's line, "Satan, than whom none higher sat," may be accepted without further discussion as idiomatic.

**That.**

The difference between *that* and *which* as relative pronouns is much easier to follow in practice than to

explain. Both may be used of either persons or things, although neither is very common in modern usage as applied to persons, *who* being almost universally preferred. *Which* is correct in this use, however, as in the sixth chapter of Matthew: "Thy Father which seeth in secret" and "Our Father, which art in heaven." *That* is not uncommon in restrictive relative clauses applied to persons, as, "There is the man that said it." It has been said that *that* cannot refer to an idea or a thought, as *which* does in such constructions as "That seems impossible, which it is."

The main difference between the two is that a relative clause introduced by *that* has a closer connection with its antecedent than one introduced by *which*. Some grammarians go so far as to say that *that* is properly used only with restrictive clauses, and this is in general the tendency. *Which*, however, may also be used for restrictive clauses, and occasional examples occur in which *that* clauses seem to be modifiers, as, for example, in these lines of Pope's:

A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
That like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

or still earlier in these lines from the "Faery Queen":

Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,  
That wasteth all his countrie farre and neare.

Both these examples, particularly the one from Pope, would seem to be evidence against another rule, namely, that *that* is never used when there is a pause between the clause and its antecedent. Whether

the punctuation is Pope's or not, at least the line is his, and if in this case he has made a line at the end of which there is no pause it will be hard to find a mate to it in the whole body of his work.

A sounder rule is that *that* never introduces a clause that is merely descriptive or progressive. In such clauses the relative is the equivalent of *and* with a demonstrative or personal pronoun, *and this, and he*. Thus, "I went up the hill which I found very steep," means "I went up the hill and found it very steep." If the sentence were to read "I went up a hill that I found very steep," the clause would be neither descriptive nor progressive, but restrictive, meaning "that hill and no other."

Another rule which is practically invariable is that *that* cannot be used in clauses in which the pronoun is preceded by a preposition, as, "This is the book of which you told me." "There is the man to whom I spoke." If *that* is used in a clause with a preposition the preposition follows the relative, as, "This is the book that you told me of." "There is the man that I spoke to." This would seem to indicate that relative *that* never stands in a position that would necessitate its receiving stress or emphasis; it is always pronounced *th't*.

As a demonstrative in such expressions as "Apples of that kind" the pronoun *that* is singular because it limits *kind*, not *apples*. In "apples of *those* kinds," *those* is plural because *kinds* is plural. *Apples of those kind* is grammatically incorrect.

As a conjunction *that* is often inadvertently repeated in a sentence with an interpolated clause, as,

“I told him that if he was going with me and wanted to be on time that he would have to hurry.” One conjunction is enough to introduce the clause “he would have to hurry.”

The use of *that* as demonstrative adverb, as, “The brook was that small I could step across it,” is now obsolete except in dialect.

**The.**

Repetition of. See *A.*

**Their.**

For misuse of *their* in such sentences as “Everybody must show *their* ticket,” see *Anybody*.

**Them.**

*Them* is incorrectly used for *those* in such sentences as “Hand me *them* books,” but not in “Give food to *them* who are hungry.” The difference between “Give *them* food” and “Give *them* to me” is that in the first *them* is the indirect object and in the second the direct object of the verb. *Them* may correctly be used as the direct or indirect object of a verb (accusative or dative case) with or without the preposition and whether or not it is followed by a relative clause.

**Then.**

*Then* is allowable as an adjective either with another adjective or a participle in an adjective phrase, as, *the then existing law*, or limiting a noun, as, *the then president*. The construction is awkward, but not incorrect.

Thence.

For *from thence*, see *From*.

Therefore.

*Therefore* is an adverbial connective meaning *in consequence of that* introducing an inference from something already stated. *Therefor* means *for that*, *for it*, and is rarely used except in very formal speech.

These kind.

See *That*.

Think.

For distinction between *think*, *suppose*, and *guess*, see *Guess*.

Thirdly.

Either *third* or *thirdly* may be used to mean *in the third place* in enumerating the heads of a discourse. See *First*.

This.

For such phrases as *this much*, see *That*.

Such phrases as *this ten days* are, of course, grammatically incorrect if *this* directly limits days. They are defensible, however, as meaning *this last ten days* in which *last ten days* is felt as a unit of time. These phrases may have gained currency in the legal and formal use of *this* before a date, as *this first day of July*.

Those.

For *those* followed by *who* or *that*, see *That* (relative). For *those sort*, see *That* (demonstrative),

Though.

For *as though*, see *As*.

Thought.

*Thought* in the sense of *an item of mental activity* may be used as we commonly use the words *idea* and *notion*. See *Idea*.

Through.

For *get through*, see *Get*.

Throw down.

*Throw down* may, it is said, be figuratively used to mean *to degrade, humiliate, deject in spirit*, as, “*Fortune raises up and throws down.*” As used of trivial matters meaning *to discard, throw off*, it is American slang.

Thus.

*Thus* primarily means *in this way*, and in all its secondary meanings retains some such significance. It means *in the manner now being indicated, in accordance with this, and to this extent, number, or degree*. As a connective between sentences it is abused when it is made to serve where there is no reference, even remote, to manner.

Till.

It is a mistake to consider *till* as a contraction of *until*. *Till* is the older word, and had originally the idea of *to* or *toward*. *Until* came into use as a compound like *unto*. It is correctly used in the sense of *until*, also in a sense nearly equivalent to *before*,

as, "He did not go till sunset." *Until* also has this meaning.

### Titles.

See *Hon., Rev., Mr., Mrs., Esq., LL.D.*

### To.

Of *to* used absolutely at the end of a clause with the infinitive understood, as, "I won't go if you don't want me to," it is said that the construction was rare before the nineteenth century, but is now frequent as a colloquialism. See *Do*.

As a preposition *to* implies motion toward and not position in. It is the verb and not the preposition that is misused in such expressions as "Bennington is a place I never was to." (See *Been to*.) It is redundant in the colloquial phrase "Where are you going to?"

An infinitive is said to be split when an adverb or adverbial phrase is inserted between *to* and the infinitive, as, "He was too busy to much miss his wife," or, *to completely and without mercy annihilate*. This construction has long been frowned on, but holds its place in spite of condemnation. As a rule it is easy to avoid it if one wishes to avoid censure; though it is hard to find any equivalent for "Enough to more than cover expenses" short of the circumlocution "Enough to cover expenses and more than cover them," or its equivalent.

Both *to* and *of* are correctly used in telling time, as, "quarter to one."

**To the manner born.**

The phrase comes from Hamlet's speech in Act I, Scene IV:

But to my mind, though I am native here  
And to the manner born, it is a custom  
More honored in the breach than in the observance.

*Manner* is here used probably as a sort of pun, at least in a double sense, intended to suggest both *manner* and *manor*. As such we may spell it correctly either way. It is now most commonly written *manner*.

**To-morrow.**

Modern usage calls for the future verb rather than the present in such sentences as "To-morrow will be Wednesday."

**Too bad.**

*Too bad*, meaning *regrettable*, *lamentable*, *reprehensible*, is very old usage. It is at worst mildly colloquial.

*Too*, like *very*, is not used with participles in the best American usage, as, *too overworked*, *too excited*, *too pleased*. See *Very*.

**Toward.**

In the early stages of the language *towards* was formed from *toward* by the addition of *es* of the adverbial genitive. It is a mistake to say that "Etymology furnishes no pretext for the adding of *s* to *-ward* in such words." No distinction need be

made in usage between *toward* and *towards*. Use whichever sounds better in a given sentence.

### Transpire.

*To escape from secrecy to notice*, now the commonest accepted meaning of *transpire*, is a figurative sense from the earlier one *to cause a gas or liquid to pass through the pores or walls of a vessel*. It is acceptable now in its figurative sense, although *come out* is often preferable on the score of simplicity. For the difference between *transpire* and *happen*, see *Happen*.

### Try.

The phrase *try an experiment* has been challenged on the ground that an experiment is a trial and therefore the verb should be *make*. We have, however, as a legitimate meaning of *try*, *to test the effect or operation of, to use, apply, or practise tentatively*. In this sense *try* is legitimately used in the phrase. Even if it were not, the phrase is well enough established to be accepted as an idiom.

On *try and* for *try to*, see *And*.

*Try as we will* should be *try as we may*. *May* is necessary because the construction always indicates some degree of remoteness from fact.

### Turn.

Of the phrase *turn away round* it has been said that *away* is redundant, also that it should never be *way*. There is, however, no authority for using *away* in the sense of *entirely*. It is doubtless a contraction

in this phrase for *all the way* and as such one form would be just as colloquial as the other. Neither could be called correct and probably neither is well enough established to be considered idiomatic.

### Turn down.

*Turn down* is said to be American slang in the sense of *to rebuke, snub, reject, refuse to accept*. There are indications, however, that it is coming into good use.

### Two first.

See *First*.

## U

### Unbeknown.

*Unbeknown* for *unknown* is an old word now found only in colloquial and dialect usage.

### Underhanded.

*Underhanded* is an unnecessary formation from *underhand*. *Underhand* is an adjective. The added *-ed* gives it no added adjective force. It cannot mean *provided with* since *underhand* is not a noun; it does not signify the past participle, for *underhand* is not a verb. In its rare meaning of *inadequately supplied with hands or workmen* it is properly formed from the noun *hand*.

### Under his signature.

See *Signature*.

**Unfrequently.**

*Unfrequently* meaning *infrequently* is a legitimate word, but of rare occurrence. It is seldom used to-day except by those who write it by mistake for *infrequently*.

**Unique.**

*Unique* means *single, the only one of its kind*. Therefore, *more unique* and *most unique* are illogical. When we say *most perfect* we mean *most nearly perfect*. Any one who says *most unique* is apt to say it because he thinks that *unique* means *unusual*. See *Chiefest, Full, Perfect, Most*.

**United States.**

*United States* may take either a singular or a plural verb, according as one thinks of the nation as a unit or of the separate states composing it. It is most commonly construed in the singular.

**Unmoral.**

*Unmoral* means *non-moral*, neither moral nor immoral. *Immoral* means *without moral sense, wicked*.

**Unreadable.**

*Unreadable* may mean either *incapable of being deciphered*, or *not fit to read*. Ordinarily, however, it means *not fit to read*, and *illegible* is used to mean *undecipherable*.

**Until.**

See *Till*.

**Unwell.**

See *Ill*.

**Up.**

*Up* is often used redundantly with verbs, as, *beat, cook, connect, finish, mix, study*, and many others. With many verbs, however, it adds an idea of totality or finality that is not redundant. “Cut the meat,” means one thing; “cut the meat up,” means another. So with *break up, burn up, eat up*, and the like.

**Upon.**

See *On*.

**Up to.**

See p. 10.

**Us going.**

See *Me*.

**Use.**

One of the old meanings of *use* is *to be accustomed, be in the habit*. It is now seldom used except in the past tense, but the difference between *use to* and *used to* is scarcely perceptible in speech. Accordingly, *use to* sometimes appears where the writer intends the past tense. It is sanctioned by present usage. The vulgar *didn't used to*, or, worse, *didn't use to* is incorrect. This should be *used not to*.

**V****Valuable.**

*Valuable* most commonly means *having financial worth*. It should be distinguished from *valued* when

*valued* means held in respect or esteem. *Valuable* would be clearly the wrong word in such expressions as *your valued letter*, *his valued friendship*, unless the speaker wishes to indicate the material gain that comes to him from either.

**Verbal.**

See *Oral*.

**Very.**

The New York *Evening Post* advises its reporters not to get into the "very habit." If we refrain from qualifying adjectives and adverbs with *very* until the word is actually needed to express the meaning, it will have some force when it is used.

The old adverbial form of *very* was *verily*, which was used to qualify verbs as well as adjectives and adverbs. *Very* has never succeeded without restriction to all the uses of *verily*. It is, however, used more in England than in the United States to qualify past participles, as *very frightened* where most Americans would say *very much frightened*. See *Too*.

**Vice.**

See *Crime*.

**Vicinity.**

See *Environment*.

**View.**

When *view* is used figuratively to indicate purpose it is most commonly followed by *to*, as, *with a view to testing his powers*. Where it is used literally we

sometimes say *to* as indicating direction, as, *a window with a view to the south*. If a specific point is named we usually say *towards*, as, *a view towards the mountain*. To indicate the general scene we use *of*, as, *a view of the valley*.

### Visit.

*Visit with* is colloquial or vulgar. *Visit* correctly takes the direct object, as, *visit me, visit him*.

### Vocation.

See *Avocation*.

## W

### Wake.

*Wake, awake, waken, and awaken* in both transitive and intransitive uses, meaning *to arouse* or *to arouse oneself from sleep*, are indistinguishable in meaning except in so far as *awake* and *awaken* are more frequent in figurative senses. *Up* may perhaps be redundant with *wake*, but it is well established as an idiom.

### Want.

*Want of* and *want with* have been condemned in such constructions as "What do you want of a new hat?" "What do you want with the knife?" They probably originate in questions as to persons. "What do you want of me?" would be correct as meaning "What do you wish to have from me?" *Want with* as applied to things is probably an ellipsis for "What do you want to do with it?" The worst that can be said of either phrase is that it is colloquial. Both

are now so widely used that they may almost be called idiomatic.

*Want* is correctly, but perhaps somewhat colloquially, used to mean *need*, as in the Hatter's remark to Alice (in *Alice in Wonderland*), "Your hair wants cutting." It is not recognized as allowable even colloquially as meaning *ought* (with the infinitive); as, "You want to get your hair cut."

Was.

For *was to be* and similar phrases, see *Is*.

The New York *Evening Post* tells its reporters that "The inverted passives *was given*, *was accorded*, etc., may be avoided in copy, but are not regarded as ungrammatical." This fairly represents the modern attitude toward these constructions. The following passage from Sweet's *New English Grammar* explains what is meant by the inverted passive:

In Old-English only transitive verbs could be used in the passive. Verbs which governed any other case than the accusative could not be put into the passive. Thus there is no passive form corresponding to *he thancode hire*, "he thanked her." But as soon as the distinction between the dative and accusative was lost, it was inevitable that from the active *he thanked her* should be formed the passive *she was thanked*. To us, *thank* is as much a transitive verb as *praise*. But we still hesitate over and try to evade such passive constructions as *she was given a watch*, *he was granted an audience*, because we still feel that she and he are in the dative, not the accusative, relation.

Way.

*Way* has been a colloquial contraction for *away* since Chaucer's time. In the United States we have

it in many colloquial phrases in which the full word *away* would be misused. English dictionaries, for example, do not recognize *away* in the sense of *far*, as in, *away out West*, *away off*. American dictionaries call these phrases colloquial; they become doubly so with *way*. As a noun *way* is correctly used to mean a short distance, as, *a little way down the road*. In this sentence *ways* is vulgar. (Compare *Everywhere*.) The phrases *wend his way* and *wing his way* are stereotyped expressions of alliterative poetry. They are too shopworn to have any value in modern prose.

**Welsh rabbit.**

See *Rabbit*.

**Went.**

*Went* is the past tense of the verb *to go*. It is always incorrect when used as the past participle, as, “I had *went*.”

**Were.**

*Were* rather than *was* is the correct form in such expressions as “I wish I *were*.” The word *wish* indicates that the state of affairs is more or less remote from fact. Therefore it demands the subjunctive form.

**What.**

We are told that “What did you come for” is an incorrect form of the question “Why did you come?” It is not necessarily so if the question means *what thing or things* did you come for. Even

as meaning "Why did you come?" it might be held to signify *for what purpose did you come?*

*What* is incorrectly used for *that* in such constructions as "I don't know but what I might." See *That*.

**Whatever.**

Both *whatever* and *wherever* are vulgarly used in questions as intensives of *what* and *where*, as, "Whatever shall I do?" "Wherever shall I go?" This usage is universally condemned. See *However*.

**Whence.**

See *From*.

**Where's.**

*Where's* is properly a contraction for *where is* and not for *where are*. Thus, such a question as "Where's my skates?" is, strictly speaking, ungrammatical.

**Whereabouts.**

As a noun *whereabouts* is construed with singular verbs and pronouns, as, "His whereabouts is at present unknown or else it is being kept secret."

**Whether.**

*Whether* is commonly used with *or* as a correlative. If the alternative normally introduced by *or* is one that would be easily or inevitably inferred, the clause with *or* may be omitted, as, "I do not know whether he will come." Here the omitted clause is the simple negative *or not*; this may almost always be omitted. The second clause, if it is a simple alternative to the

first, should not be introduced by a second *whether*. After the first clause has been completed by *or*, a second entirely new alternative may be introduced by another *whether*, as, "I do not know whether he will go to Chicago or to Omaha, or whether he will take me with him when he goes." *Whether* should not be used in both clauses, as, "I don't know whether I shall go to Chicago, or whether I shall go to Omaha." *Or* should introduce the second clause.

*If* in the sense of *whether*, as, "I do not know if he will go," is very old usage. It has been censured, however, by modern critics, and the present tendency is to use *whether*.

The phrase *whether or no* is an old idiom possibly elliptical for *whether any or none*. That the *no* in this phrase stands for *none* seems to be indicated by such quotations as "'I will,' she said, 'do as he counseled me, comfort or no.'" The phrase is also idiomatic in the form *whether or not*. In this form it may be that *not* stands for *naught*.

While.

As conjunction and adverb *while* and *whilst* are the same in all senses. In poetic phrasing *whilst* appears also as a noun, as in the phrase *the whilst*.

*While* is much abused as a general utility connective. It is correctly used in a certain figurative sense meaning *at the same time that*, expressing a logical connection, as, "While this proposition is undoubtedly sound, we should nevertheless keep in mind," etc. The misuse of *while* as a connective is its use to mean merely *and*, *but*, *notwithstanding*, or to

express any one of one hundred relationships each one of which has a connective of its own. See *And*.

### Who.

The choice between *who* and *whom* in the sentences "Who do you suppose is his father?" and "Whom do you suppose to be his father?" depends on the construction of the pronoun in the sentence. In the first *who* is in the nominative case because it is the subject of the verb *is*, and the whole relative clause (*who is his father*) is the object of *suppose*. In the second the pronoun is the object of *suppose*, as it is clearly in such a sentence as "do you suppose him to be my father?" In the sentence, "This is the boy whom you said you saw," *whom* is the object of *saw*. The construction is more obvious when the sentence is put in the form "This is the boy whom you saw, as you said."

### Whole.

*Whole* as used for *all* in such an expression as "the whole steps to the Christian life," has been criticized. *Whole* is correctly used to mean *all* or at least *entire* in such phrases as *the whole city*, *the whole race*, and the like. The real difficulty in the phrase *the whole steps* is that *whole* is improperly used with a plural noun. *Whole of* is improperly used for *all* for the same reason in such an expression as *the whole of the delegates*. *Whole of* with the singular noun, as *the whole of the congregation*, is no worse than colloquial. In formal speech we should say *entire*. *Whole lot* for *a great deal* is also colloquial. See *Lot*.

Wholesome.

See *Healthy*.

Whom.

See *Who*.

Whose.

*Whose* is the possessive case of *what* as well as of *who*. The modern tendency is to use *of which* wherever possible in referring to animals or things. *Whose*, however, is correct in such constructions.

Why.

For the use of *why* in clauses of cause and reason, see *Because* and *Reason*.

Will.

See *Shall*. For *be that as it will*, see *As*.

Wind.

When *wind* means *to sound by blowing*, as of a horn, the preterit should be *winded*. The preterit *wound* belongs to the verb *wind* when it means *to turn*. It appears as the preterit of the verb meaning *to sound* by association with the other verb, and probably also from some vague idea of fitness by association with the curves of the horn.

Wish.

The use of the past form *wished* for the present, as, "I wished I had one too," is vulgar. It arises possibly as a contraction of *wish that*.

With.

For *with* after *want*, see *Want*.

Without.

*Without* or *without that*, meaning *unless*, as, "You can't come in without you have your ticket," is not used to-day by careful writers or speakers except to give the effect of archaic language. See also *But* and *Except*.

Womanly and Womanish.

See *Childlike*.

Worse.

As an adverb *worse* is properly used to mean *with more severity, more intensity*, but it is always incorrectly used to mean merely *more*, as, "After I saw it I wanted it worse than before." *Worst* is similarly misused in such expressions as "I wanted it the worst way."

Would.

For ordinary uses of *would* and *should*, see *Shall*. For *would better*, *would rather*, *would sooner*, *would liefer*, see *Have*.

Wouldn't that jar you.

See p. 6.

Write.

*Write* followed by the indirect object without the preposition *to*, as, *write me on Wednesday*, is set down as commercial or vulgar, which means that it

is perhaps allowable in business letters, but nowhere else. *Me* without the preposition legitimately follows *write* in the Shakespearian construction “Write me a sonnet,” meaning something like *for me*, and, “Oh, that he were here to write me down an ass,” in which the meaning may be what the reader pleases, since it is Dogberry who says it. With the direct object as well as the indirect the construction seems more acceptable. *Write me a letter* or *write me a post-card* seem at worst nothing more than colloquial.

### Wrong.

*Wrong* and *wrongly* are both adverbs and in many constructions either form may be used. Where the adverb immediately precedes the verb, *wrongly* is required, as, “The word was wrongly printed.”

## Y

### Yearly.

See *Annual*.

### Years.

For such expressions as “A child of four years,” see *Of*.

### Yet.

When *yet* means *up to the present time, hitherto*, it may be used interchangeably with *as yet*.

### You.

*You* is sometimes used generically to mean *one* or *any one*, as, “You never can tell,” “You soon get used

to it," and the like. It is idiomatic usage, but is always rather colloquial and is easily overworked—that is, it becomes monotonous if the construction is long sustained. *You all for you* is a piece of American dialect. See p. 4.

## Z

Zepp.

See p. 8.



### Part III

## GLOSSARY OF GRAMMATICAL AND OTHER TERMS USED



(Many of these definitions are taken from the author's *Guide to Good English*, Harper & Brothers, 1914, where such matters will be found fully discussed.)

#### **Absolute.**

Absolute use of a word or phrase is its use without a connective to show its relation to other words or phrases. An absolute construction is usually a participle with related words, standing without a connective, in the place of a clause, as, "*Being tired*, he sat down," "*The bridge being closed*, we turned to the ford."

#### **Abstract noun.**

An abstract noun is one which names something which is not apprehended by the senses, as, *justice*, *sanctity*.

#### **Accidence.**

Accidence is the part of grammar which deals with inflectional changes of words, the changes of form to indicate changes of meaning, such as number and case of nouns and pronouns, tense, mood, and voice in verbs, and the like. The word *accidence* is said to be a variant of *accidents*. The changes were probably thought of as accidental in that they are slight

changes which do not affect the essential form of the word.

#### Accusative.

The *accusative* or *objective* is the case of a noun or pronoun (or any substantive element of a sentence) which stands as the object of a verb or preposition. It may be indicated by the form of the word, as, nominative, *he*, *she*; accusative, *him*, *her*.

#### Active voice.

A verb is said to be in the active voice when the subject of the verb acts, performs the action denoted by the verb. It is in the passive voice when the subject is acted upon; as, *active*, I hold; *passive*, I am held.

#### Additive.

An additive conjunction is one which expresses no relationship between the words or ideas it connects, except that one is added to the other,—that they coexist; as, *and*, *also*, *moreover*.

#### Adjective.

An *adjective* is a word used to modify or describe a substantive or noun; as, “the *small* basket.” A phrase, or group of words may be used as an adjective; as, “the *but recently discovered* islands.” Such a phrase is usually called an *adjective phrase*.

#### Adverb.

An *adverb* is a word used to limit or modify a verb, adjective, or other adverb; as, “go *quickly*.” An

*adverbial phrase* is a phrase used in the same way; as, "He started with all the speed of which he was capable."

#### Adversative.

An *adversative* connective or conjunction is one which sets off two ideas in opposition or antithesis; as, *but*, *however*.

#### Agreement.

Grammatical agreement is the necessary correspondence between subject and verb in person and number, and between noun and pronoun in number and case, and the like.

#### Americanism.

An *Americanism* is a word, phrase, or construction peculiar to the English of the United States, not in current use in, or characteristic of, the English of Great Britain. Such are *elevator*, *baggage*, *freight-car*, where British use has (respectively) *lift*, *luggage*, *goods-van*. See also the discussion of idiom and slang in the "Guiding Principles," Part I.

#### Antecedent.

The *antecedent* of a pronoun is the noun which is the name of the object which the pronoun designates. In the sentence, "I dropped the vase, but it did not break," *vase* is the antecedent of the pronoun *it*.

#### Archaic.

Language is *archaic* which is no longer in general use, but is used when the writer or speaker wishes to give a tone of antiquity to his discourse, as:

“ ‘Hold off! Unhand me, graybeard loon!’  
Eftsoons his hand dropped he.”

### Article.

The *article* is the part of speech represented by *a* or *an* as the indefinite article, and *the* as the definite article. Like the adjective, the article attaches to the noun, but with little or no limiting or modifying power.

### Articulate.

*Articulate* means *jointed*. As applied to speech or sound, it means *divided into words or syllables*, or, *pronounced distinctly*.

### Articulation.

Distinct pronunciation, division into syllables; see *Articulate*.

### Aspirate.

Pronounced with a breathing sound; the sound of the letter *h*.

### Attribute.

In grammatical language an *attribute* is either a quality ascribed to something, or the word which so ascribes it, an attributive word.

### Attributive.

An *attributive word*, or an *attributive*, is a word, usually an adjective, which ascribes a quality to something, as, *swift* in “the swift ship.” In “the ship is swift,” *swift* is not attributive, but predicative.

### Auxiliary.

An *auxiliary verb* is a *helping verb* which is added to another to express tense, mode, or state or condition of action. The common auxiliary verbs are *be*, *can*, *do*, *have*, *shall*, *will*, *should*, *would*, *could*, *may*, *must*, *might*.

### Back-formation.

A supposed source-word which is really a derivative. The verb *to burgle* is a back-formation from the noun *burglar* because it seems to be the source of the noun, as *drive* is the source of *driver*, whereas really the verb arises merely because the noun sounds like a noun of agent coming from a verb. So when we define *sculptor* as *one who sculps*, we have the verb *sculp* as a back-formation from the noun. *Jell* (verb) is a back-formation from *jelly*; *enthuse* is a back-formation from *enthusiasm*; *ovate* a back-formation from *ovation*; *peeve* a back-formation from *peevish*.

### Case.

The *case* of noun, adjective, or pronoun is its relation to some other word in the sentence. If the word is inflected, its case will appear in its form, as, nominative, *he*; accusative (objective), *him*; possessive, *his*.

### Clause.

A group of words containing subject and predicate combined with other such group or groups to form a sentence. A clause which would form a complete sentence if it stood by itself is called an *independent*

*clause*, as, "I shall go fishing." A clause which would not so form a sentence is called a *dependent clause*, as, "if it does not rain."

#### Clearness.

As a rhetorical term, *clearness* has been defined as "the quality of writing which appeals to the intellect."

#### Colloquial.

As applied to the use of words, *colloquial* means *acceptable in informal or familiar speech, but not in formal or elevated speech or writing*.

#### Common noun.

A noun which designates an object merely as a member of a class, not as an individual, as, *man, laborer, farm*. See also *Proper noun*.

#### Comparative.

The form of an adjective which indicates a higher degree of the quality in the object named than in some other object, as, *higher, wetter*. See also *Positive* and *Superlative*.

#### Comparison.

The change of form in adjectives to indicate the degree (amount or intensity) of the qualities they name. See *Comparative*.

#### Complex.

A *complex sentence* is one which has two or more clauses one or more of which must be dependent or

subordinate, as, "While we were getting up the mainsail, the sun rose and the wind began to blow."

### Compound.

A *compound sentence* is one composed of two or more independent clauses. It contains two or more subjects and predicates, as, "The sun rose, and the wind began to blow." See *Simple* and *Complex*.

### Concessional.

A *concessional clause* is one which concedes (admits) something, as, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," "Even if I am a fool, you needn't remind me of it."

### Concrete noun.

A noun which names a concrete thing, as, *water*, *tree*.

### Conditional clause.

A clause which attaches a condition to the action of the main verb of the sentence, as, "If he sees you, he will run."

### Conditional mode.

The mode of the verb in conditional clauses introduced by *if* or *unless*. English has no separately inflected forms for the conditional, but often uses the subjunctive, as, "If that were the case, I should telegraph at once."

### Conjunction.

A word used to connect words or groups of words, as, "Proud and saucy," "Yes, but you don't go."

**Connective.**

Any word, not necessarily a conjunction, or any phrase, clause, or sentence, used to give coherence to discourse by showing relationship between ideas, as, "*This, then, is the present state of the case,*" "*Be that as it may, I shall not go a step farther.*"

**Connote.**

*Imply* or *suggest*, as applied to the meaning of a word. The *connotation* of a word, as opposed to its *denotation*, its "dictionary meaning," is the more or less vague halo of suggested meaning which gathers round it.

**Construction.**

The *building together* of words. The construction of a word, phrase, or clause is its grammatical relation to others.

**Construe.**

To *combine grammatically*, as, "*Eaves* is usually construed with a singular verb." Also to *parse*, to explain the grammatical relation of words.

**Coordinate.**

*Of equal rank.* Two coordinate clauses have the same rank in the sentence; are either both independent, or both dependent. See also *Subordinate*.

**Coordinating.**

A coordinating conjunction is one which joins coordinate clauses, as, *and, but*. See also *Subordinating*.

**Correlatives.**

Pairs of corresponding words or phrases regularly used together, as, *whether . . . or*, *not only . . . but also*, *so . . . as*, and the like.

**Dative.**

“Designating the case of a noun which expresses the relation of indirect or remoter object, generally indicated in modern English by *to* or *for* with the objective” (Webster).

**Denote.**

As applied to a word, *denote* means *to signify, mean*. As opposed to *connote*, it applies to the express meaning, rather than to that which the word suggests or implies.

**Dependent clause.**

A dependent clause is one which depends for part of its meaning on another clause or other clauses in the sentence, as, “if you are going.” See *Clause*.

**Derived meaning.**

A secondary meaning arising, often from a figure of speech, from the first or primary meaning of a word. Thus *clash*, meaning primarily a certain kind of harsh noise, comes to mean *collision* and *conflict*, from the occurrences which give rise to the noise. Many examples will be found in Part II, as under *Implicit*.

**Dialect.**

A form of speech showing the peculiarities belonging to a certain locality or group of speakers.

**Diction.**

Choice of words.

**Direct discourse.**

Speech quoted in the exact words of the speaker, as, "He said, '*I am going.*'" See *Indirect discourse*.

**Direct object.**

The substantive standing in the nearest or immediate objective relationship to a verb or preposition, as distinct from the indirect, or more remote object. In the sentence, "He gave coffee to the soldiers," *coffee* is the direct object of *gave*; *soldiers* is the direct object of *to* and the indirect object of *gave*.

**Discourse.**

See *Direct* and *Indirect*.

**Distributive.**

A word which refers to each individual of a class or group rather than to the class or group as a whole, as, *each*, *every*. As an adjective it means *having the force or effect of a distributive word*.

**Ease.**

Rhetorically, *ease* in discourse is the quality that pleases the ear.

**Elegance.**

The same as *ease*; see definition above.

**Ellipsis.**

An omission of logically necessary words which are more or less clearly understood, as, "I can but

think" for "I can do naught else but think," "as if" for "as it would be if."

#### **Elliptical construction.**

A phrase or sentence involving an ellipsis, understood as if the missing words were expressed. For examples see under *Is* ("Isn't but one") and *In* ("In future") in Part II.

#### **Euphemism.**

The substitution of an acceptable expression for one that is harsh or unpleasant, as, *pass away* for *die*, *appropriate* for *steal*, *limb* for *leg*.

#### **Familiar.**

*Familiar* speech is the colloquial speech which we use with familiars, but not with those with whom we are on more formal terms.

#### **Figurative language.**

Language involving figures of speech.

#### **Figure of speech.**

A departure from literal truth, or from the literal meaning of words or expressions, intended to give force or emotional effect to the discourse; as when Shelley speaks of the dying leaves of autumn as "pestilence-stricken multitudes." See *Metaphor* and *Simile*.

#### **Finite.**

A finite verb is one of the forms of the verb which are limited to certain times or conditions of action.

(any forms which indicate mode or tense), or to use with expressed subjects. All forms of the verb are finite except the infinitive and gerund.

#### Future.

Tenses of the verb describing action which has not yet taken place.

#### Genitive.

The case in inflected languages which expresses possession or source, indicated in English by the possessive case or by *of* or *from*.

#### Gerund.

The verbal noun in *-ing*; see *Infinitive*.

#### Govern.

*Govern* in the grammatical sense is used of verbs and prepositions that require certain cases in nouns depending on them. They are said to *govern* either the dependent noun or the case they require.

#### Grammar.

The science of language, dealing usually with accidence (inflectional forms of words) and syntax (the relations of words to one another in the sentence) and phonology (the science of spoken sounds).

#### Hyperbole.

The technical name of the figure that depends on exaggeration for its force; in common use, the word means merely exaggeration.

#### Hyperbolical.

Exaggerated; see definition above.

**Idiom.**

A form of speech peculiar to a given language, which could not be translated into another. Also, a form of speech not according to strict rules of grammar, but sanctioned by good usage. See "Guiding Principles," Part I.

**Idiomatic.**

Having the qualities and characteristics of an idiom.

**Illogical.**

A construction is called illogical when it is absurd if the words are taken strictly in the meanings, as, "He acted *as though* he were angry."

**Imperative.**

The mode of command in the verb; "*Come at once.*"

**Indefinite pronoun.**

A pronoun which does not determine the person or thing to which it refers. These words are sometimes pronouns and sometimes adjectives. The class includes such words as *all, any, any one, aught, both, each, either, every, few, many, naught, none, nobody, neither, one, other, some, something, somewhat, such*.

**Independent clause.**

An independent clause is one which would make a complete sentence if it stood by itself, as, "*I will come as soon as I find my hat.*" See *Clause* and *Dependent*.

### Indicative.

The mode of the verb which indicates that the action is thought of as fact, as, "If it is true, I shall hear of it." See *Subjunctive*.

### Indirect discourse.

Speech quoted in words not exactly those of the speaker, in a clause introduced by *that* after a verb of saying, as, "He said *that he would go*." The exact words of the speaker were "I will go." See *Direct discourse*.

### Indirect object.

The more remote object of the action of a verb. In the sentence, "He gave it to me," *me* is the indirect object, and *it* the direct object, of the verb *gave*. See *Direct object*.

### Infinitive.

The parts of the verb which are not finite are the infinitive and the gerund. The infinitive may express action without subject or condition, as, "To err is human; to forgive, divine." The gerund is the verbal noun in *-ing*. It is unlimited in its use, and is sometimes called an infinitive: "Working (i. e., to work) all day is hard."

### Inflection.

The changes through which a word goes to indicate changes in meaning, as the declension of a noun or adjective, the conjugation of a verb, comparison of an adjective, and the like. See *Accidence*.

**Intensive.**

A word serving to give force or emphasis, as, “He *himself* has said it,” “*all*-righteous.”

**Interjection.**

A word “thrown in” without grammatical relation with others, and with hardly more than an implied meaning, to express emotion, as, *oh*, *alas*, *pshaw*, *hurrah*, and the like.

**Interpolate.**

Put in as an afterthought, insert.

**Interrogative.**

Having the form or effect of a question.

**Intransitive.**

A verb which takes no object is called *intransitive*, as, *walk*, *rejoice*, *fly*. Such expressions as “walk a mile,” “walk the plank,” “rejoice the heart,” “fly the kite,” do not exhibit direct objects for these verbs,—they mean “walk for a mile,” “walk on the plank,” “cause the heart to rejoice,” “make the kite fly.” The fact that in English we do not distinguish accusative from dative obscures the distinction between transitive and intransitive. See *Transitive*.

**Inverted passive.**

A passive construction in which the indirect object of the active verb becomes the subject of the passive verb. For the active construction “They gave him a watch,” the normal passive would be “A watch

was given to him by them," in which the object (*watch*) of the active verb becomes the subject of the passive verb. In the inverted passive, "He was given a watch," the subject is the indirect object of the active verb. See further explanation under *Was* in Part II.

#### Irregular verb.

A verb not conjugated according to a normal or regular method, as the verb *to be*. Some grammarians call all strong verbs irregular. See *Strong verb* and *Weak verb*.

#### Legitimate.

Allowable, in good use, generally accepted.

#### Limit.

Grammatically the same as *modify*, as an adjective limits or modifies a noun, an adverb a verb, and the like.

#### Logical absurdity.

An absurdity from the logical point of view. See example under *Alike* in Part II.

#### Loose sentence.

A sentence which is grammatically complete before the end, as, "I went, and as soon as I got there I found," etc. The first two words grammatically complete a sentence. See *Periodic*.

#### Metaphor.

A figure which implies likeness between two things by applying to one a word literally applicable only to

the other, or by assuming it to be another. Thus, to say, "The mob surged up the hill," implies, by using the word *surge*, that the mob is like the sea. "Shoot folly as it flies," assumes that folly is like a bird.

### Mode (or mood).

A series of changes in the form of a verb to indicate the manner of the action. The mode which indicates that the action of the verb is thought of as fact is called *indicative*. That which marks the action as possibly not fact is called *subjunctive*. Other so-called modes are not properly inflected forms in English (see *Conditional*).

### Modify.

Qualify the meaning of a word or phrase.

### Modifying clause.

One which adds an idea that limits but is not essential to the idea it modifies, as, "Jim Smith, *who had been fast asleep all the time*, suddenly began to applaud." See also *Restrictive clause*.

### Mood.

See *Mode*.

### Nominative.

The case of the subject of the verb and all words in agreement with it.

### Non-restrictive clause.

Same as modifying clause.

**Normal order.**

The normal order of the English sentence is (1) subject and its modifiers, (2) verb and its modifiers, (3) object and its modifiers; as, "The frightened horse ran swiftly down the narrow street."

**Noun.**

A word which stands as the name of something. See also *Common noun*, *Proper noun*, *Abstract noun*, *Concrete noun*, *Substantive*.

**Number.**

The change in the form of noun, pronoun, adjective, or verb, to indicate reference to one person or thing, or to more than one.

**Object.**

The word, phrase, or clause, naming that on or toward which the action of the verb is exerted or directed, or that with which a preposition expresses relation. See *Direct object* and *Indirect object*.

**Objective.**

The case of the object of verb or preposition; same as *accusative*.

**Obsolescent.**

On the way to become obsolete, going out of use.

**Obsolete.**

Gone out of use, discarded as antiquated.

**Onomatopœia.**

The imitation by words of the sounds they are intended to name, as, *murmur*, *hubbub*.

**Parallel construction (or structure).**

Similarity of construction in clauses that serve the same purpose in the sentence, as, “*To have* positive opinions, *to keep* oneself informed, *to vote* at every election, these are the requisites for membership.”

**Parse.**

To explain the grammatical relations of a word to others, or to analyze a sentence grammatically, explaining its structure.

**Participle.**

The verbal adjective in *-ing* or *-ed* and corresponding forms in more or less irregular verbs. It is like the adjective in modifying nouns, pronouns, and substantive phrases and clauses; like the verb in that it expresses action, has tense, and takes an object. See *Gerund*.

**Passive voice.**

The forms of the verb that indicate that the subject is acted upon, as, active, *I hold*; passive, *I am held*.

**Perfect tense.**

The tense which denotes the action of the verb as complete at the time of speaking, as, “*He has come*.”

**Periodic.**

A term applied to a sentence (less often to a paragraph or larger unit of discourse) which, by withholding the verb or other essential element, suspends the completion of its meaning to near the end. The open-

ing sentence of the Declaration of Independence is an example. See also *Loose*.

#### Person.

Form of pronoun or verb to indicate whether the antecedent of the pronoun or the subject of the verb is the speaker (first person), the person addressed (second person), or some one who is neither the speaker nor the one addressed (third person).

#### Personal pronouns.

The pronouns designating person; first person, *I* and *we*; second person, *thou* and *you*; third person, *he*, *she*, *it*, *they*.

#### Phrase.

Grammatically, a group of related words not containing subject and predicate; loosely the term applied to any small group of words.

#### Pleonasm.

A form of redundancy involving the use of words which might be omitted without impairing the meaning. It may be used to give emphasis. See *Redundancy* and *Tautology*.

#### Plural.

“The property of a word by virtue of which it denotes more than one” (Webster).

#### Positive.

The ordinary form of the adjective or adverb indicating no special degree (amount or intensity) of the quality it names.

**Possessive.**

The case of noun, adjective, or pronoun denoting possession.

**Predicate.**

The part of the sentence, normally the verb and its modifiers, expressing what is said of the subject,—the subject denoting the thing about which something is said.

**Predicate adjective.**

An adjective completing the meaning of the predicate, as, "The window looks *clean*," "The well is *deep*."

**Predicate nominative.**

A noun in the nominative case completing the predicate with verbs of *being*, *seeming*, *becoming*, etc., as, "The Prince became *Emperor*," "Chaucer was a *poet*."

**Predicative.**

See *Attributive*.

**Prefix.**

One or more syllables added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning, as, *archbishop*, *ex-president*.

**Preposition.**

A word which connects a substantive called its object with other words in the sentence, as, "Come *to* me," "The General *with* his aides."

**Prepositional.**

Having the nature or effect of a preposition.

**Present use.**

The usage of to-day as contrasted with obsolescent or obsolete usage. See Part I.

**Preterit.**

Past tense; applied specifically to the tense that denotes the action merely as past, as distinguished from the past tense which takes account of duration, as, *went* (preterit) distinguished from *was going*.

**Primary meaning.**

The first or original meaning of a word; not necessarily, however, taking it back farther than it can readily be traced in English. See, for example, successive meanings of *Moot* in Part II.

**Principal parts.**

A series of forms chosen to exhibit the different stems of the verb; in English they are the present indicative or infinitive, the preterit, and the past participle, as, *go, went, gone*.

**Pronoun.**

A word used instead of a noun. Its function is to designate an object without naming it—as does the pronoun *it* in this sentence.

**Proper noun.**

A noun which names an individual without necessarily referring it to its class, as, *James Quinn, Hillside*

*Acres, Memorial Day.* The common noun names only the class, as, *laborer, farm, holiday*.

**Provincial.**

Diction which belongs to the provinces rather than to the capital; countrified.

**Quotation (direct and indirect).**

See *Indirect* and *Direct* discourse.

**Redundancy.**

The use of superfluous words. It is the larger term, including tautology, pleonasm, and others.

**Redundant.**

Unnecessary or containing superfluous words.

**Reflexive pronouns.**

Pronouns compounded of the personal pronouns with *self* (*myself, himself*, etc.) are reflexives when used to indicate that the subject of the verb exerts on himself the action denoted by the verb, as, "He hurt himself."

**Relative.**

A relative pronoun is a pronoun used as a connective to indicate grammatical relation, as, *who, which, what, that*. Other words in certain constructions or meanings may be relatives, as, *but* when it means *that . . . not* (see *But* in Part II). A relative clause is a clause introduced by a relative connective, most often a relative pronoun, as, "He is the man *who did it*."

**Restrictive.**

A clause limiting the meaning of a noun or substantive element of the sentence, and inseparable from it in meaning, as, "The book *which we are reading now* is much more interesting than the former one." See also *Modifying*.

**Salutation.**

The personal address to the recipient at the beginning of a letter, as, "Dear John," "Dear Cousin Anne," "My dear Mr. Smith."

**Secondary meaning.**

The derived meaning of a word arising from the primary or original meaning. For example, see *Moot* in Part II.

**Sentence.**

The smallest independent unit of discourse, consisting in its simplest form of a subject and a predicate, as, "I went."

**Sequence of tenses.**

The relation of the time of the verbs of the two or more verbs in the main and subordinate clauses of a complex sentence. In "I knew that he said it," the time of both verbs is past in reference to the time when the sentence is spoken, but one is not necessarily past in reference to the other, as in "I know that he said it." There is no rule for sequence of tenses in English except that they must express what the speaker wishes to express. "I wished to have done it," means "I wished at that time to have done

it at some time still further in the past," and is incorrect if the speaker means "I wished to do it."

### Simile.

An imaginative comparison, which, for emotional effect, likens two objects in one or more aspects, however unlike they may be in others, as, "My love is like a red, red rose."

### Simple futurity.

The time of an action represented as to happen in future in the ordinary course of events, uninfluenced by volition, determination, promise, or prophecy.

### Simple sentence.

A sentence composed of a single independent clause. It contains one subject and one predicate, as, "The sun rose."

### Singular.

Denoting one person or thing.

### Slang.

Words and phrases in more or less disreputable use, usually comparatively new coinages, but often very old. See general discussion of the subject in Part I (pp. 6-10).

### Speech, figures of.

See *Figurative language*.

### Stress.

Emphasis or accent placed on a syllable or a word in speech, usually consisting in an increase in the

volume of sound of the voice and in the length of time taken to pronounce the word or syllable.

### Strong verb.

A verb that forms its preterit and past participle by a change in the vowel rather than by adding *-ed*, as, *drink*, *drank*, *drunk*. Some grammarians call such verbs irregular in spite of their uniformity. See *Weak verb*.

### Subject.

The substantive word, phrase, or clause, denoting that about which something is said.

### Subjunctive.

The mode of the verb which indicates that the action is thought of as possibly not fact, as, "If I were you." See discussion of certain constructions under *As* in Part II.

### Subordinate clause.

Dependent clause; a clause which is dependent for its meaning on another clause, as, "if it rains."

### Subordinating conjunction.

A conjunction which necessarily introduces a subordinate or dependent clause, as, *if*, *though*, *while*.

### Substantive.

That which has the nature of a noun, as nouns, pronouns, noun-phrases, noun-clauses.

### Suffix.

Letter or syllable appended to a word to change its meaning as a regular process of word-formation, as, *-ed* in *stilted*, *-or* in *conductor*.

**Superlative.**

Form of the adjective denoting the highest degree of the quality expressed by the adjective.

**Syllable.**

The smallest unit of pronunciation, containing one vowel sound and in many cases such consonant sounds as immediately precede it, or follow it, or both.

**Synonym.**

A word that is the equivalent of another in the same language in all or most of its meanings and uses. See p. 11.

**Syntax.**

The relations of words in sentences; sentence construction; the rules governing such relations.

**Take.**

Govern, be followed by, as, "An adjective cannot take a dependent clause" (p. 26), "A transitive verb may take a direct object."

**Tautology.**

A form of redundancy consisting of a repetition of the idea in different words, as, "a new beginner," "surrounded on all sides," "dotted here and there."

**Technical.**

Pertaining to a special process, trade, profession, sport, etc. See p. 4.

**Tense.**

Form of the verb indicating the time, and in some instances the degree of completion, of the action denoted by the verb.

**Transitive.**

Capable of taking a direct object.

**Unaccented.**

Receiving no stress in pronunciation, as, the syllable *-tion* in *proportional*.

**Unity.**

As a rhetorical term, *unity* means singleness of purpose and effect in sentence, paragraph, or whole composition.

**Unstressed.**

Same as *Unaccented*.

**Vague.**

Not clearly expressed or defined, having only indistinct meaning; distinguished from *ambiguous*, which means having two possible meanings.

**Variant.**

Form of a word differing only in comparatively unessential detail from the one named, as, *bye* from *by*, *draft* from *draught*.

**Verb.**

A word which asserts or declares; the part of speech which predicates; as, "I *read*," "You *know* him."

**Verbal.**

Partaking of the nature of the verb, as, "The gerund is a verbal noun." As substantive, that which partakes of the nature of the verb.

**Voice.**

The forms of the verb indicating whether the subject acts (active voice) or is acted upon (passive voice). See *Active* and *Passive*.

**Volition.**

Exercise of the will; voluntary choice of future action; see *Shall* in Part II.

**Vulgar.**

Plebeian, low, coarse.

**Weak verb.**

One which is inflected by the addition of syllables to the stem, rather than by vowel changes in the stem (see *Strong verb*), as, *hate, hated*.













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